Encounter

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by John Rae

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by Peregrine Worsthorne

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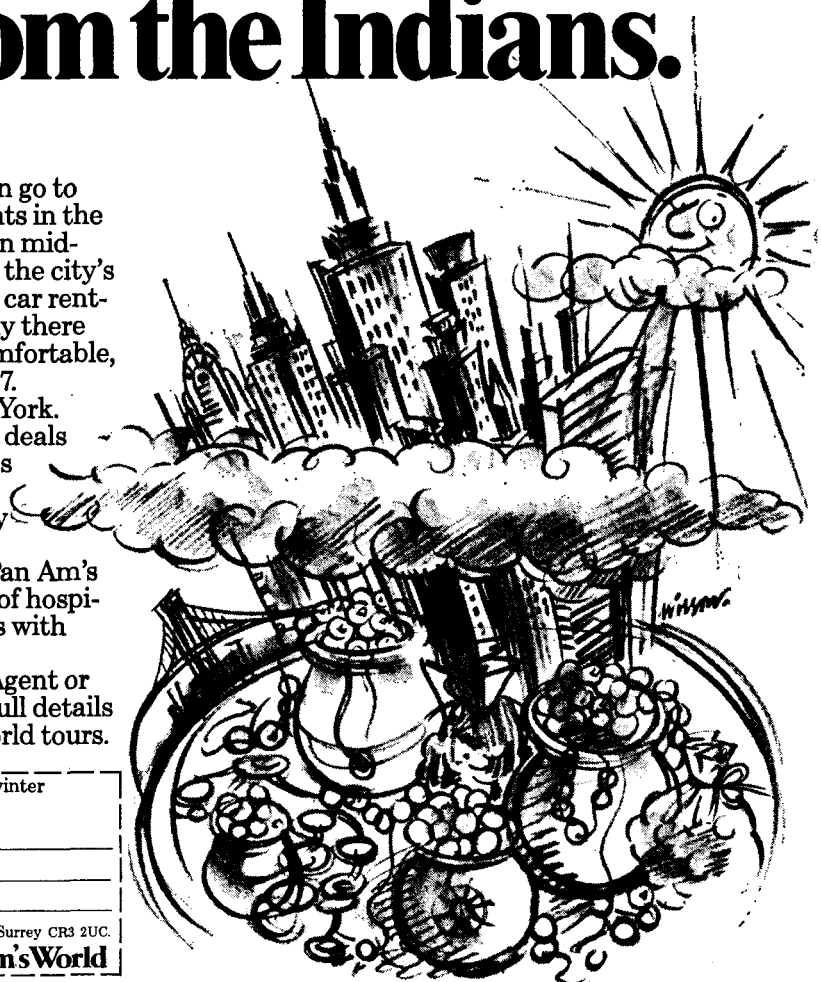

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Gillian Tindall

Winter's Tale

"WELL—I'LL BE OFF then", he said after a considerable pause. He picked up the suitcase: it was the small blue one, the one Helen always packed as the first-three-days one when they went on holiday.

"I think everything's there", she said. "I put in two pairs of spare socks, that will be enough I should think? Unless you're going to do much walking. . . ."

"I don't know", he said at length, after the further expectant pause in her voice. "I shouldn't think so. I don't know."

"I've put in *both* your check shirts, as you're going to the country, and your lovat pullover. . . . And I haven't forgotten your asthma pills."

He said ungraciously: "You know I haven't needed them for *ages*."

"Well", she said with a forced smile, "let's hope you won't. It would be just like life, wouldn't it, if I left them out and then this turned out to be the one trip you needed them?"

"I feel sure you're right", he said with measured lack of response. The need both to quarrel and not to quarrel with Helen paralysed him. He wanted to quarrel. He wanted to have a really good excuse for leaving her suddenly in the lurch like that (with all those cousins coming to Sunday lunch too) and staying away for days and days. If he parted from her affectionately he would be entrapped into a web of promises—to phone her that evening, to let her know where he was staying, to look up the Hurlstone-Joneses if he went anywhere near Shaftesbury. . . . He wouldn't be tied like that, dammit he wouldn't! But at the same time. . . . Poor Helen. . . . How rottenly he was behaving, he thought, with sad, voluptuous indulgence in the idea.

"Well—have a nice time", she said, determinedly cheerful. This abrupt decision of his to take part of his holiday now, without her, to go away on his own to an undecided destination for an indefinite number of days—it was so uncharacteristic of him, of their whole way of life. She minded, of course she did. He saw it, and grieved for her.

But at the same time he also saw that she was coping with it very nicely, thank you, having worked out an explanation for it in her own mind as she always did for everything. She didn't try to boss or demand or make scenes (never scenes, with Helen). But she had her own way of gaining the upper hand. Her very helpfulness, her matter-of-fact acceptance of things, her unobtrusive efficiency, she managed to turn into a control system. She was ever ready to understand him: that was her great secret weapon. Probably, he thought, whipping up his resentment further in order to march out of the house, she already, after only two days notice, had his present behaviour filed neatly in her mind under the heading "male menopause" or "mid-life crisis" or some such patronising claptrap. Filed along with all those other neat folders of notes on her Samaritan cases which occupied so much of her time and energy now that the children were grown up. So sensible of her to have found another interest. Bloody hell.

As he walked round to the car he thought: I wonder if burglars or shop-lifters feel like this as they leave the scene of their crime? I bet they do. . . . But no, on reflection the analogy did not seem right, for what crime had he committed in the last twenty odd years of their married life? None, really, till now. And what was he carrying covertly away with him? Nothing. Nothing but his suitcase which Helen had made hers by packing it. Even his asthma seemed not his own, since Helen was the one who remembered it, who knew about it. Long ago, in the early years of their marriage, he had occasionally had it quite badly, at night. It would start in sleep, and it would take him a long time to realise and locate the discom-

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fort. By that time Helen would be gently shaking his shoulder:

"Darling, you've got asthma. . . . Darling, wake up. . . . Shall I get your pills?" And regularly on these occasions, like a recurrent dream, he had been vaguely surprised, as he surfaced into wakefulness gasping for breath to find only Helen and himself. He had been convinced there was someone else in the room, that someone else had asthma, not he.

From Weybridge he drove to Esher, and then on to the Guildford by-pass. He drove without thinking, enjoying the sensation of mindlessness, the suspension of reality. He was well into Hampshire before it occurred to him that what he had been inadvertently doing was following the westward trail of many previous family holidays: Studlands and Lulworth Cove in Dorset in the 1950s when the children had been small, later sailing holidays in Devon. . . . No, no, that wouldn't do: that wasn't what he was looking for at all. He turned abruptly southwards.

But that way too he presently reached the sea. He had forgotten about Portsmouth and Southampton and the blighted coast between them. He had embarked at Southampton in 1941, on a troopship. Seasick and twenty, he had lain in a bunk and had been sure that, like a young officer going out to Flanders' mud, he would never see England again. But of course it hadn't turned out like that at all, and three years later he had found himself at a desk job at Catterick, Yorkshire. There he had met Sally. . . .

ENOUGH OF THAT. There was no sense in brooding on the past—never had been. Indeed by saying that to himself for the last twenty-five years he had virtually extinguished the past: it simply wasn't there to brood over any more because you were no longer the same person. He felt little interest now in that earnest, enthusiastic young man who had walked with Sally on the north Yorkshire moors and stood with her in the rain under the open vault of Rievaulx Abbey. Anyway you never remembered the things you really wanted to remember. They had been married soon after VE day in Leeds Town Hall. He remembered even now the broad stairs up which they had gone and the worn surface of the desk in front of which they had stood. But he could not, by any device, remember what Sally had looked like. When he tried—he had used to try, once, though he had long given that up—instead there had swum into the frame of memory Helen's face on that other wedding day seven years later, large and animated beneath a picture hat against banks of flowers and a marquee in her parents' Surrey garden.

It wasn't just that he couldn't remember what Sally had worn to be married in. He couldn't remember *what she looked like*. Never had been able to. He had no photo of her. He realised there was no good reason for this: it was just that he had never felt the need of photographs of anyone. (It was Helen who kept the ample family albums, spending whole evenings pasting in holiday snaps and school groups and meticulously labelling them.) Oh, of course he knew Sally had fine dark hair and a round face with regular features and grey, short-sighted eyes. He knew she was about five foot five, and slim, and was twenty-two when he married her and twenty-five when she died: he could have given a perfectly convincing description of her to any police force. But he couldn't, in his own mind, *see* her. He had once been told by an ophthalmologist that there is one point on the visual field where objects become momentarily invisible before appearing again: something to do with the position of the optic nerve. . . . Ever since then he had the odd feeling, when he thought about it, that he couldn't see Sally because she was standing just at that point.

Not that he had thought about it much, of course, for years. In any case his inability to recognise even people he knew quite well, in an unfamiliar setting, had been something of a joke between Helen and himself for years. She said that she was sure that sometimes when they had arranged to meet in Sainsbury's or in a theatre foyer, he would look straight through her thinking "Why is that woman smiling at me?" And once, to his shame, he had momentarily failed to recognise their eldest, Andrew, when meeting him at Euston at the end of a school term. The truth was, he realised afterwards, his mind had been elsewhere because he had been looking for someone else. But who?

FROM THE OUTSKIRTS of Southampton he turned inland again. He was looking for

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something. After a while it dawned on him that the something was probably lunch. It was approaching two; he had been driving for several hours. He stopped at a pub and ate cheese sandwiches sitting in what seemed to be the saloon bar although it was called the Nook. He asked for "Best Bitter", and when it came was unable to decide if it was really indifferent and gassy or whether it was his own taste that had changed. He was out of practice, a pint seemed quite enough, whereas long ago he would have thought nothing of drinking five or six pints in an evening. He wondered briefly what his own children drank, now respectively post-graduate at Sussex and undergraduate at Leicester. He was sure their generation didn't drink in pubs much. Pity, really, but when you looked at the disproportionate way beer had gone up in price you could see why. Fish and chips too. When he had been demobbed and first went into the Company's northern office, his pay had been under twelve pounds a week, and they had lived well on that even including the rent of their flat! Unbelievable.

Of course when he had married for the second time the picture had been quite different: Helen's family were relatively well-to-do, and in any case he and Helen had been lucky to be house-buying before prices began to go through the roof in the late '50s. Lucky—yes, they had been lucky all along really. Helen herself would certainly say so. The last thing anyone would call her was a discontented woman, and when he heard what some husbands had to put up with he felt guiltier than ever at his present lack of appreciation.

He had realised quite early in their married life that Helen regarded making the best of things as a duty and being unhappy as a sign of failure, like taking to drink or not having any friends or (perhaps?) not getting married. Though she always maintained the polite fiction that disasters were entirely a matter of chance and that one could only feel "There, but for the grace of God . . .", he yet knew that at some level she believed that tragedy only struck the incompetent, or those who were in some way a little eccentric.

Eccentric and incompetent. It was surely both to die in childbirth, of all things, in 1948, the year of the National Health Act, in a large, adequately equipped hospital? An extraordinary thing to happen, everyone had agreed. Their General Practitioner had been particularly insistent on that point. But at the same time he had, looking at his notes, remarked that Sally's last ante-natal check-up had been four weeks previously and of course they did like to see mothers more often than that during the last month. . . . A holiday away from home before the baby came? Staying in a pub in the Lake District? Mm-hm. Yes. Well, with hindsight one might. . . . But of course it was hard to say. These things just did sometimes happen. One must be wary of drawing any definite conclusion.

NO CONCLUSION. No end. So, their marriage had not ended. It had simply stopped one day, unexpectedly, like a clock in mid-tick. For months, years even, with some part of his mind he had expected it to resume, but of course it never did. Like a home unvisited, like a letter unopened, like a railway line on which the trains have ceased to run, it remained, merely becoming out of date. As time went by he had more and more other things to think about anyway.

Suddenly, as if that was what he had stopped for in the first place, he asked the landlord if he let rooms. They didn't, it appeared, but the other pub in the village did. He hurried there; it was just on closing time. A woman said Yes, she could give him a room, but would he mind coming back later as it wasn't Done yet: they didn't get many visitors in winter, she said apologetically. He felt glad, now he reflected on it, that he had chosen the dead, dank end of winter for his journey. Being middle-aged was being constantly surprised at the numbers of people crowding the holiday spot you remembered as small and quiet, being middle-aged was still half expecting beer to cost 1/9 a pint and a three-course English lunch for seven and six, even though you had been dining clients on an expense account for years. Being middle-aged was not expecting anything new or different or more important to happen any more.

He told the woman he would return, and drove off again. He was looking for—what? Well, for a way to spend the afternoon. The villages seemed deserted, the fields likewise. What did modern farmers do at this time of year? He felt restless, unsatisfied. This classic English landscape, with its tamed, hedged

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charm, was what Helen liked: it wasn't his sort of thing really. She might imagine that this was what was meant by the beauty of England, but then she had scarcely ever been north of Birmingham.

THEN, AS HE WAS PASSING through Bishop's Waltham, his eye was caught by a towering grey wall somewhere off to the left beyond a lake. There were ruins here, and of immense size. That was better. He parked the car and made his way round to the entrance, where a board claimed that this was the remains of the palace belonging to the medieval bishops of Winchester. Well, well. He had always liked History at Grammar School and had once, encouraged by the Head, vaguely thought of trying for a scholarship to read it at Manchester University, till the War and the Army had put an end to his educational ambitions. These days, when they visited a ruin or a stately home, it was Helen rather than he who read the guide book assiduously and often aloud. Architectural or artistic detail bored him anyway: he didn't want to hear about exceptionally fine vaulting or cruciform windows or carvings believed to be by a pupil of Grinling Gibbons. It was the general vague perception of the past which he enjoyed when strolling around these places, and for that it was much better to be alone, as now. He liked, without ever quite expressing it to himself, the half awareness of other realities besides his own, perhaps still maintaining their existence on the same patch of ground but in some different and alternate time-scale: intimations that the past still lived, was not wholly obliterated.... But this afternoon, pacing the spongy turf, this feeling eluded him. He looked up at the enormously high but fragmented walls, where birds now sat in a row above cascading ivy, and tried to see the place roofed, with glazed windows catching the light of the sinking sun, but could not.

Then he realised, with a stab of irritation, he wasn't even alone as he had thought. Someone else was inexplicably visiting the site on this chilly, mid-week afternoon in late February. His eye was caught by a red coat round the side of a piece of masonry. It disappeared for some minutes, but then reappeared again right on the far side of the grass, near the reed-choked moat: a figure in a red jacket, trousers and wellingtons was walking slowly in his direction. As it came nearer it resolved itself into a young, dark-haired woman—or was she just a girl? Perhaps, he thought, she was an archaeology student. Afterwards, he didn't know why he had decided that; something in the way she looked at the place must have conveyed the impression that she knew about it, that she wasn't a chance visitor like himself but was here for a purpose.

She stopped a few yards from him and smiled. "Good afternoon", she said.

I know this girl. The thought was instantaneous and positive. Yet when he tried to concentrate on this, ranging in his mind over his acquaintances and Helen's, asking himself *who*?—the sense of familiarity lessened and dissipated itself. The girl continued to look at him as if indulgently amused by his evident failure to place her.

"It's getting colder, isn't it?" she said companionably, hands in pockets. "I don't think I shall stay here much longer."

"Yes." He took a deep breath, shelving the problem of identification for the moment. "It's damp—a damp site, with all that water all round it. Funny place to choose really, for such a building."

"I think it must have been a *summer* palace", she said with the gravity of a child parading its particular bit of knowledge. "In the winter the bishop would have been in Winchester, wouldn't he? It would have been too far to travel in bad weather from one place to the other every day, even on horseback."

"Yes, I suppose so...." They both gazed at the towering flint remains. "Huge place just for a summer palace", he said.

"They were *enormously* rich, those medieval princes of the church. Like oil millionaires and politicians rolled into one. I expect this place was partly for the bishop to entertain in."

"Important overseas clients you mean?" he said, and they both laughed. "Do you come here often?" he asked, and then, realising that this sounded ridiculous, added hastily: "I mean—you seem to know something about the place."

"I've never been here before in my life", she said, smiling at him again in that odd way she had, as if they were not just friends but

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old friends who understood one another well.

AFTER A PAUSE, he said: "We're quite near Winchester here, aren't we? By modern standards, I mean."

"Oh yes. About ten miles, I think. Something like that. I was there earlier in the day. But I didn't see you there."

There was something odd about this remark, perhaps she had misunderstood what he had just said. "I thought of going to Winchester this afternoon", he said, although the idea had only just occurred to him.

"Have you never been there?" she asked, and he shook his head. "I don't believe I have, no. It's an awful admission, isn't it? One of the most important towns in England, historically. . . ."

She said, with a resumption of her serious manner: "I don't like it as much as York. I like that best of all. But Winchester is a very fine place, all the same. . . . Would you like me to show it to you?"

"Why—certainly", he said, concealing his surprise. She spoke so matter-of-factly that you couldn't call her behaviour provocative, and yet. . . . Oh, perhaps she had misinterpreted his remark about thinking of going into Winchester next as a tentative invitation, and this was her way of gracefully accepting. Her reference to York and some slight intonation in her voice made him think she must be someone he had once known up north, but then their conversation had not been that of two people meeting by chance after a gap of many years. . . . In any case he had already half made up his mind that she must be one of his children's friends, one of those familiar faces that come and go in your house but whom you never quite bother to put a name to.

They walked together towards his car. He was about to unlock it when something occurred to him: "Where's yours?"

"My what?"

"Your car."

"I haven't got a car", she said, smiling as if the very idea were faintly ridiculous.

"But you said. . . . I mean, you were in Winchester earlier today?"

"Yes. But I haven't got a car." As if that dealt with the matter she calmly opened the passenger side door and got in. Funny, he had thought he left the car locked all round as usual. Evidently he couldn't have.

Afterwards, although he knew they had talked all the time on the way to Winchester, he couldn't remember much of what they had said. It had been mostly about history, he thought: it had been nice being with someone who seemed interested in a subject for its own sake for once. Perhaps she had done most of the talking while he listened? But no —he had the impression afterwards of having been more loquacious than he usually was, drawn out by her friendly warmth and apparently calm acceptance of himself and the situation. Well, if she wasn't worried about picking up a strange man and accepting a lift in his car, why should he be? Her manner was without a trace of flirtation. She told him nothing about herself but then he didn't ask, fearing to spoil the relationship that had sprung up between them by appearing inquisitive.

THE CENTRE OF Winchester seemed to be buried in a complex modern defence system, a scheme of ring roads. Eventually they parked the car near the top of the hill and walked down again. It was chilly, and twilight was falling. He felt glad to reach the town's heart, where the main street had been barred to traffic. Here in the lamplight the gabled shop-fronts seemed like a stage-set above the unnaturally quiet street with its rubberised paving.

"Nice place to live, I should think", he said appreciatively.

"Nice to visit anyway", she said. "I enjoy being in a strange town, don't you?"

Had someone else said that to him once? He thought someone had but couldn't place it.

Not many people were about, the shops were shutting. He paused to look in a window here or there—at soft, desirable leather things in a saddler's, at a print of sailing ships in Southampton harbour, once at some rather nice tweed jackets in a tailor's. Each time, she stopped placidly alongside him. It was only after a while it occurred to him that she never paused to look into a shop on her own account. Surely that was very unusual in a woman? Helen, habitually alert for a "good buy", would by now have already earmarked half a dozen things—shoes, a handbag, a silk frock or sweater maybe—to "come back and look at tomorrow", although

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when the morrow came she rarely did, being fundamentally prudent about money. Planning in theory what she might buy was simply her way of getting on to terms with a strange place. But this girl didn't seem to feel any need to look into the shops she passed: in spite of her previous remark she walked as if she knew the place well anyway.

"You don't come from hereabouts, do you?" he said suddenly, feeling intrusive even by such a mild question, and she said casually:

"Oh no, I've never been here before today."

She didn't ask in return where he came from, he noticed, and it only occurred to him now that not only had she proffered no information about herself, she had asked him nothing whatsoever either—not about his home or his circumstances or what he was doing in this part of the country. But if she thought, rightly or wrongly, that she knew him, then she didn't need to, did she? He wondered momentarily with uncomfortable amusement if in her eyes he was someone quite other—that she had simply mistaken him for a person well-known to her out there on the ruins? He did not want this to be the explanation: it would be embarrassing for both of them if she were to realise her error, and anyway he was enjoying himself too much. He did not want to believe that the pleasure of her company and the gentleness with which she spoke to him was all just a matter of mistaken identity.

AT HIS SUGGESTION they went into a café. She said she would like a cup of tea, but, feeling festive, he insisted on ordering slices of chocolate cake as well. It was a comfortable, carpeted place with pretensions to being a Continental coffee lounge, but also serving grilled dishes. Although it was only late afternoon several people were eating these, and again he was reminded obscurely of the north of England.

"I rather like these modern places", he said comfortably. "Not much individual style to them of course—but they provide a very decent sort of service."

"I think it's very nice here", she said warmly. She had already eaten her chocolate cake, though he hadn't noticed her do so. She had unbuttoned her red jacket and he saw she had on a grey sweater over a checked shirt rather like the one he himself was wearing. He found himself wondering what her breasts were like—you couldn't tell under those thick clothes—and then chided himself for being a dirty old man: their afternoon together hadn't been like that at all.

"Once cafés weren't at all like this", she said thoughtfully. "I remember.... Food used to be very drab once, didn't it?"

"I'll say, specially for a few years after the War. No coffee bars then, no Indian or Chinese of course—just workmen's coffee shops and dingy, ladylike little places that did scones. It was that or fish and chips. But of course you'd hardly remember."

"Oh, but I do", she said promptly and with a shade of firmness in her voice, as if even this indirect approach to a question were a little too personal. "I remember it very well."

Her face was turned away from him as she spoke, and anyway it wasn't easy in the diffused, apricot lighting to get a good look at her, but he suddenly thought for a moment that he had been mistaken and that she was years and years older than he had at first taken her for. Why, she was a woman of almost Helen's age.... No, no, he corrected himself at once, that was ridiculous. And out at the ruins in broad daylight he had taken her for a young girl, a teenager almost. But he was no longer sure.

Yet when he had paid and they were out again in the almost dark street, she took his arm companionably and said, looking up at him with the fresh, confiding face of an imaginary daughter or favourite niece—

"Now for the cathedral?"

"Yes", he said. "Yes, of course." How could they visit Winchester and not see the cathedral? Yet as she led him purposefully through an alley or two and out into a wide, grassy space with the huge, floodlit cathedral on the far side of it, he felt a sudden, obscure sense of dread, as if somewhere in that vast, palatial mansion of God lay an answer he did not seek, a revelation of which he was afraid.

For a moment he felt consciously alone and afraid as he had not done for many years. The girl's arm was still through his, and he pressed it close to him for comfort. As if she understood what he was feeling, she gave it a reassuring squeeze.

THEY ENTERED THE CATHEDRAL by the west door. Night had extinguished

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the windows, but had brought to the huge nave a fragile quality: filled with its own internal but dim light against the blackness without, the church seemed vulnerable, a shrine perilously surviving in a dark world. They moved, a few feet from one another now, towards the high altar with its towering screen, and then into the vaulted recesses behind it. Their feet rang on the stone. They wandered along, occasionally stopping to read a tombstone or marble plaque aloud to one another. Under great canopied tombs like four-poster beds slept those great and powerful princes of the church whom she had mentioned when they had first met. Now their palace was a roofless shell in a dark field occupied only by the birds.

He wanted to say something about this to her: he turned towards her, but she spoke first, in the very words he might have used:

"Isn't it strange", she said, "how some things last and some don't? Some buildings like this one last and last—and some just as big or important are allowed to fall down, or even to disappear completely."

He swallowed, and said with difficulty, but the dull weight of his unbelief in anything beyond this life lay heavy on him—"It's churches that last. There must be something in it. . . ."

"Not always, they don't. Think of Rievaulx Abbey. It's all just chance really—time and chance happeneth to all man, like it says. But it happens more quickly to some than to others. Some people are very durable, they go on and on. But others have a much briefer, all-of-a-piece time—and then it's over for them. Finished. Gone." And as if to belie what she had just said, or to show that the idea did not worry her, she stopped momentarily with her face turned directly towards him in the haze of a light concealed behind a pillar. She smiled at him.

In that moment, like a flame igniting in his mind, he knew who she was. He knew. But he also knew that it could not be true. He stood still, holding his breath, the great church pressing on him.

She moved away and began to walk once more in the direction of the Lady Chapel. He saw her moving among the bishop's tombs and hastened after her, through confusing pools of light and darkness. His feet echoed and he tripped at a low step between one chapel and another and nearly fell.

He had lost her. In panic he quickened his step, hastening right round the curve of the apse. Coming out into the great nave he thought he saw her red coat again momentarily, just as he had first seen it in the palace, moving among the pillars, but realised as soon as he opened his mouth to call to her that the coat was a full-length one belonging to a quite different woman. He called nevertheless.

"Sally! Come back, Sally."

And a young couple who happened to be passing, in soft shoes and anoraks, looked in wonder at this middle-aged man calling out a woman's name in the middle of an empty cathedral.

OUTSIDE, IT HAD BEGUN to drizzle. He turned his collar up and made his way slowly back to the car, getting lost a couple of times on the way.

He did not look for her along the wet, empty pavements with their deceptive reflections. He did not believe that he would find her and perhaps he did not want to, for if he did and demanded an explanation and she turned out to be just a living girl after all. . . . He would rather keep what he had experienced in the church, even if it was over, even if it would never happen to him again and he was alone for ever. Even if it never had happened anywhere but in his own mind.

Once inside the car, with the windows shut against the rain that was now beating quite heavily on them, he sat and thought for a long time. He had not left his suitcase at the pub where he was supposed to be staying. Well perhaps, as things had turned out, it was just as well.

He started up the engine, checked the petrol gauge and pulled away from the kerb. Signs beckoned and confused him, the ring-roads were choked with the homeward-going cars of office workers, the rain streamed down. But by and by he found himself at the main roundabout south of the town. He hesitated only a moment more—then took the road for London.

He should be home in time for a late supper. Helen would be pleased anyway. She would be relieved that he had recovered so quickly from his little aberration. She was sure to be able to whip him up something out of the freezer.

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John Rae

Our Obsolete Attitudes

Education & the National Malaise

I WANT TO EXPLORE the connection between Britain's present difficulties and her inability to shake free from national attitudes that belong to a different period of her history. In doing so I shall give a central role to education both because it is the aspect of the British problem with which I am most familiar and because the education system is one of the most striking examples of British unwillingness to throw off obsolete attitudes. I am not discussing the reasons for Britain's industrial decline but the reasons why Britain finds it so difficult to reject attitudes that make recovery impossible.

It is central to my thesis that there are such things as national characteristics and national attitudes. The characteristics change—if they change at all—over a very long period of time; the attitudes come and go with the historical context, sometimes reflecting the characteristics, sometimes overriding them. Although my children have in their veins the blood of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, I have to recognise that the dominant element in forming national characteristics and attitudes is the English. Before the 19th century the English were an aggressive, successful, and enterprising people, not much given to reflecting on the morality of public policy, stubborn in the defence of their liberty, above all self-reliant and prepared to take the risks of their adventurous and acquisitive nature. They do not seem to have been a particularly pleasant or humane people, but they had over the centuries developed those characteristics that were essential to the survival of a small trading state off the coastline of continental Europe.

Then there occurred one of those periods in history when these national characteristics were overridden by a new set of national attitudes. Professor Harold Perkin in his *Origins of Modern British Society* put it like this:

> "Between 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive. brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world, and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical."

National characteristics did not disappear; they were temporarily suppressed or given rein only in respectable form. What had happened? The unruly English had discovered religion and responsibility. The peculiarly English form of romanticism transformed scepticism into evangelical faith, anarchic public schools into training stables for Christian gentlemen, and overseas territories acquired for commercial purposes into an Empire for whose moral upbringing the mother country was responsible. The small trading state living off its entrepreneurial wits had been appointed—or rather had appointed itself—Head Prefect of the world.

For 150 years it would act responsibly, administering vast areas of the globe with a uniquely successful blend of classical and Christian idealism. It is not surprising that the British did not foresee the dangers of developing attitudes that would be fatal if the office of Head Prefect was taken away. Why should they? It was an office on which the sun would never set.

IN THIS SENSE (if I may be allowed to mix my images freely) the British were a Cinderella people, translated to a glittering role, heading for a midnight the significance of which they could not appreciate. The image is perhaps only apt in its limitations for Cinderella had two advantages over the British: not only did she know the significance of her midnight; if the ball had gone to her head, there was also an abrupt and unmistakable way in which the significance

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would be brought home to her. But the British failed to notice that midnight had struck until long after the hour, and continued dancing unaware that for them a major historical episode had ended. A military defeat in 1940—a Jena, compelling root-and-branch reform—might have done the trick. "Defeat disguised as victory", which is how historians such as Robert Skidelsky see the Second World War, is not enough. If wars are going to be lost they must be seen to be lost. An illusion of victory only reinforces obsolete attitudes.

MY ARGUMENT, THEN, is this. Whenever midnight struck—and historians will differ as widely as 1870 and 1956—the British should have shuffled off as quickly as possible attitudes that were appropriate to their Cinderella/Head Prefect role, faced the reality that they were once again a small island off the continental coast of Europe and rediscovered in themselves those national characteristics of energy, aggression, and enterprise that had once made their island the most successful trading state in the world.

Britain's failure to do this is partly accounted for by sheer lethargy; the country felt that it needed a rest after all its imperial exertions. But the world does not grant sabbaticals. A country that loses one role must find another, though when Dean Acheson pointed this out in the 1960s he provoked only petulant resentment.

Failure is also partly due to the resistance to change on the part of the old and the new establishment. I have lived too close to the old establishment of church and state not to recognise that almost without exception they are cultured and kindly men and that almost without exception they cannot bring into clear focus what has happened to their country. They watch uncomprehendingly as their country slides into poverty but, reassured by the ritual element in their lives and by the social deference the British still display in the face of rank or title (in itself one of the obsolete attitudes that needs to be thrown off), they cannot bring themselves to admit that a revolution in national attitudes is necessary if the country they love is to prosper.

The old establishment has a nostalgic interest in the status quo. The new establishment of organised labour has a vested interest. The uniquely powerful position of British Trade Unions is the product of precisely that period of history when Britain's imperial confidence was at its height. Secure in the knowledge of their greatness and apparent economic strength, the British could afford to be generous in the drafting of Trade Union legislation. Most of that legislation is now as obsolete as the attitudes that gave it birth, but the leaders of the new establishment are no more inclined than those of the old to admit that change is necessary. They realise that if people grasped the full implication of being the inhabitants of a small trading state living off its wits, the privileged position of the trade unions would be one of the first anachronisms to be swept away. What is more they must know that what keeps the new establishment in power is the prolonging of that attitude of bosses and workers, of Them and Us, that itself belongs to the period of British history now ended.

But undoubtedly the most powerful agent working against the liberation of Britain from obsolete attitudes is the widespread belief that this liberation has already taken place.

I WANT TO USE EDUCATION as an illustration of how this self-deception works. The formula is simple. Obsolete attitudes appear to be replaced by new ones, but the new are only the old in disguise. Thus what appears to be progressive is in truth a turning away from reality and a clinging to a world that has passed. And because it is a self-deception it postpones, perhaps fatally, real reform and modernisation. In education it worked like this.

The British education system is essentially the product of a society that could afford to regard what happened in schools and universities as having little bearing on the wealth of the country. A world-wide Empire provided the British with a mercantilist's dream—a closed-cycle economic system which provided abundant wealth without making the mother country gear its whole society to production. The great trading nation that became a great administrative nation was never effectively orientated towards the production of wealth because it did not have to be; its manufacturers enjoyed protected markets. Of course, not all their trade was with the Empire: in Edwardian times (when 82% of our exports were in manufactures) only about one third went to the sterling area outside Europe, but that one third seems to have been enough to allow the British to get away with a failure to innovate, particularly in the field of technology.

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SUCH A SOCIETY could afford to take an unworldly view of the role of education. There *were* critics who warned that this education was dangerously irrelevant to the industrial wealth upon which the nation's power depended but they were ignored.

As Herbert Spencer wrote in his work *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (1861):

> "That which our school courses leave almost entirely out, we thus find to be what most nearly concerns the business of life. Our industries would cease, were it not for the information which men acquire, as best they may, after their education is said to have finished. The vital knowledge—that by which we have grown as a nation to what we are, and which now underlies our whole existence—is a knowledge that has got itself taught in nooks and corners, while the ordained agencies for teaching have been mumbling little else but dead formulae."

The public schools and universities of the late 19th century looked with disdain not only on the world of commerce and industry but on any suggested innovation that might imply that education could be of benefit to that world. In the University of Cambridge "even French and German could not be instruments of humane learning like Latin and Greek, because they were useful in international trade."[1]

The attitude inculcated by the old public schools was more blatantly snobbish. In H. A. Vachell's immensely popular novel about Harrow School, *The Hill* (published in 1905), the characteristic attitude is delineated without trace of satire in the boys' view of parental occupations. Aristocrat, judge, leading politician, soldier, clergyman, explorer—these are all acceptable roles for fathers to fill. The one parent who appears to have demonstrated any entrepreneurial skill is treated with sneering throughout the book. Even his product—the "Seamless Whaleskin Boot"—seems to have been chosen by the author to mock as well as look down on the whole world of the manufacturer. The son is shown to be flabby, spoilt, and a coward who is finally expelled when he is found guilty of dishonesty (involving money, of course) by a housemaster who represents the pure world of classics, cricket, and mountain climbing.

The purer world was frequently interpreted literally as being far away from industrial and commercial impurities. New public schools were sited whenever possible deep in the countryside. Older schools based in the cities, such as Charterhouse, moved out to the pure surroundings of the Surrey hills. Westminster, which refused to move from its historic site beside the Abbey, suffered a decline.

AT THE TIME—that is to say, in Victorian and Edwardian England—this public school disdain for trade and respect for public service was not as damaging as some present-day critics suppose. The public service ethic ensured that sufficient men were prepared to administer and defend a vast Empire with a sense of duty, putting status before financial reward. As Rupert Wilkinson has pointed out, "the high status awarded public service did no more than provide a healthy counterbalance to the material inducements of private enterprise."[2] The danger of this ethos was that men in influential public positions had had the sort of education that predisposed them to be suspicious of innovation and reluctant to implement technical ideas.

A simple illustration was the inability of such men to innovate in the use of military tactics. At the start of the Boer War in 1899 one of the axioms of British musketry training was that soldiers were not allowed to fire independently but only in volleys on the order of an officer. The nature of the enemy and the terrain made independent fire imperative, but senior officers were at first incapable of permitting such a breach of the rules, with the result that British soldiers were picked off by the Boers' independent fire like clay pipes in a shooting gallery. Failure to innovate in fields much more directly concerned with the production of wealth was correspondingly more damaging.

The public schoolboys had acquired other, related attitudes from their education that we shall meet again in a different guise—hostility to individual initiative; a preference for conformity (as late as 1955 when I started teaching at Harrow tennis was banned as an inter-school game because it might encourage individuality and undermine cricket where the individual was subordinated to the team); a suspicion of independent thought; and an uncritical acceptance of the conventional view, it being regarded as "swagger" or "putting on side" (both punishable offences) to challenge the norms of behaviour.

Just as important, from our point of view, as the unworldly and conformist bias of the schools was the fact that the success of the imperial

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[1] Sheldon Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons* (1968), p. 257.

[2] Rupert Wilkinson, *The Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition* (1964), p. 118.

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economic system reinforced the established British attitude that the state should not interfere in any way in what was taught in schools. A Napoleon prescribing a curriculum with a utilitarian slant, even a Von Humboldt prescribing a staple diet of Latin and Greek for the Prussian *gymnasium* after the nation's defeat at Jena, would have been anathema to the British.

These attitudes were not restricted to the public schools. To a greater or lesser degree they flowed from the public schools into the state education system which developed during the period 1870–1918 when the influence and prestige of a public school education was at its height. The 1902 Education Act, for example, ensured that state schools inherited the same unworldly bias, and that the central government would have little or no effective say in what was taught in the classroom.

WHEN MIDNIGHT STRUCK, when the office of Head Prefect ended, when the Empire disappeared, all these attitudes should have been challenged by the British people themselves. As we have seen, this did not happen. Instead a process of self-deception, of retreat from reality began. Nowhere was this more blatant than in the education system. The educational changes of the last 25 years are regarded as "reforms", as signs of progress. They are thought to mark the nation's wish to have an education system "more appropriate to its needs."

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The principal educational changes have been these:

The ending of selection for grammar school based on intelligence at 11+, so that now all children regardless of intelligence go to the same comprehensive school. Thus there is a uniform system in which even moderately high flyers are kept firmly in their place by the prevailing anti-intellectual ethos. In many comprehensive schools this attack on identifiable ability is reinforced by insistence on mixed-ability teaching groups.

The discrediting of competition in terms of both external exams and internal prizes on the grounds that it discourages the weak and encourages anti-social, egocentric attitudes in the strong. Many teachers in Britain relate the evils of competition in schools with the evils of economic competition, seeing a direct causal link from one to the other. The elimination of the selfish pursuit of individual success in examinations is seen as "a blow against the selfish pursuit of profit under Capitalism."

The provision of the widest possible choice of subjects to study. It was one of the key arguments for the comprehensive school that the larger unit would be able to offer a wider subject choice, particularly in the Sixth Form.

Finally, *the emphasis on the socialising role of schools*—so that the primary purpose of education is seen as the elimination of differences and the inculcation of "right attitudes" which in turn produce a more equal, more just society.

THESE SO-CALLED REFORMS have not escaped criticism. The counter-attack against "progressive" education has gathered momentum in the last two years, concentrating on falling academic standards and failure to develop the potential of more able children.

But the attackers are no more aware than the defenders of what has been happening. They see the origin of "progressive" education in Britain as the Utopian ideas of liberal thinkers from Rousseau to John Dewey, and they suspect the educational Left of wanting to use schools as implements in an egalitarian revolution. But while this version of what has been happening contains part of the truth, it misses the essential point that the educational reforms *are not reforms at all but an aspect of that self-deception whereby the British cling to the obsolete attitudes of the imperial past*. It is not surprising therefore, that critics of "progressive" education have few constructive alternatives to propose, and tend to couch their critique in terms of *going back* to educational attitudes that at least seem different and preferable. The Conservative Party, for example, has been consistently unable to propose a credible alternative to Labour's secondary re-organisation on non-selective lines.

The clue to the self-deception is in the timing. Can it be coincidence that at the very moment when the British people, stripped of their Empire, faced a harsh competitive world, their education system was busy eliminating competition in all its forms? Can it be chance that just when the unworldly curriculum needed to be directed towards the specific needs of an island dependent again on its trading success, the policy adopted in schools gave such a wide choice of subjects, including many new "soft options", that the subjects most likely to be of use—mathematics, science, and foreign languages—suffered a

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disastrous decline in many state schools? Can it be accident that just when the nation was thrown back on its own resources of talent and ability, the state schools were doing their best to subordinate these qualities to the less able majority?

There are too many coincidences here, and if only to satisfy the historical detective instinct we should look further.

WHAT SHOULD STRIKE US IMMEDIATELY is that the so-called reforms in British education all have a familiar ring. This determination to keep intelligence firmly in its place, this desire for uniformity, this dislike of competition and individuality, this preference for subjects on the curriculum that are of no direct utilitarian value to the industrial society, this emphasis on the school as a vehicle for inculcating social attitudes, this suspicion of any hint of government control—where have we come across all these before? The answer is, of course, in educational attitudes of Imperial Britain and in particular in the ethos of the Victorian public schools.

It would be tempting to exaggerate the similarities between current educational norms and the attitudes of Imperial Britain. Clearly there are fundamental differences. But the similarities are striking enough to support my argument that Britain's recent educational changes are an escapist retreat from reality, a *reinforcement* of obsolete attitudes, *not* a rejection of them. A few examples will illustrate how the self-deception works, how the obsolete attitudes are re-issued as reforms.

THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN the position of the pupil who wishes to take his work seriously in the modern comprehensive school and in the Victorian public school is so obvious as hardly to require description.

In both contexts he either uses his talents and runs the gauntlet of his peer group or he hides talent by deliberately underachieving. By and large in the Victorian public school he chose the former and survived, while in the modern comprehensive he prefers to underachieve. But the attitude of the peer groups is essentially the same. Thus revulsion against the 11+ examination was not so much against "mistakes" and "injustices", as against that traditional scapegoat of public school fiction—"the swot." It was this that at the time provided common ground between socialists, who disliked selective grammar schools because they were socially divisive, and conservatives who disliked grammar schools because they were "swot shops." The conservative *volte face*, whereby they have recently discovered the virtues of grammar schools, is not altogether convincing.

Again it is important to remember that the Victorian public school attitude to clever pupils ("too clever by half") served a purpose whereas the new version of that attitude does not. Imperial society needed some men of high intelligence, but too many men with a highly developed critical faculty would have undermined an administrative system that set a premium on loyalty, conformity, and willingness to subordinate the individual to the team. But today, when the country is thrown back on its own resources and wits, it desperately needs critical intelligence. Reluctance to recognise this is a clear case of clinging to an attitude that once served a purpose which in the new historical context is both dangerous and obsolete.

By far the most revealing similarity between modern and Imperial schools is in their attitude to trade and industry. We have seen that in the Victorian public school the low status accorded to a career in trade and industry at least served a purpose. That purpose is no longer valid. Britain still needs good public administrators but no longer needs to bias the education system in their favour. The island trading state now needs men with entrepreneurial skills, with knowledge of technology, with an awareness of the need to create wealth. These needs have been stated often enough and even have the ring of platitudes, but the education system is refusing to respond. The reason will not surprise us.

At the very moment when the needs became acute and the obsolete attitudes in the education system most obvious, the nation failed to grasp the implications. The failure operated at various levels. Technological higher education failed to establish parity of esteem with the academic universities. One result was that *home* demand for engineering courses both at universities and Polytechnics has been so poor that the proportion of *foreign* students in these courses has risen from under 9% in 1967 to 22% for universities and 35% for Polytechnics in 1976, with a significant high point of 44% for Polytechnic courses in *production* engineering. In some higher education institutions it is only the foreign students who are keeping the engineering course alive!

This sort of development in higher education is frequently blamed on the schools; and certainly

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the schools' failure to understand the real meaning of modernising the curriculum has contributed to the continuing bias in British education against trade and industry. The Imperial school curriculum was at first classically orientated; as new subjects were introduced—modern languages, science, and so on—they were presented as essentially non-utilitarian. Meanwhile the schoolmaster's attitude remained firmly hostile to anything so soul-destroying as industry, or so intellectually barren as engineering. As the Empire disappeared, the opportunity to reform the curriculum and destroy its unworldly bias was missed.

The changes that were introduced took the now familiar form of retaining through self-deception the attitudes that had existed for over 100 years. So in the new comprehensive schools the wide range of options already mentioned enables pupils to *opt out* of the very subjects they need to cope with the country's new situation. The new subjects, notably the social sciences, promote precisely that bias in favour of public service and against industry that characterised the Victorian public school.[3] All that has changed is that public service in the Empire has been replaced by public service in what Noël Annan has called "the new bureaucracies of higher education, broadcasting, journalism, research organisations, social welfare, planning and the plethora of commissions, committees, boards and regulatory agencies designed to restrain evil and promote virtue. . . ."

THE NEW BUREAUCRACIES have taken their toll of the most able. Between 1968 and 1975 —the years when, if modernisation had taken place in the education system, the switch from "public service bias" to "industry bias" would have begun to show—the proportion of male UK graduates going into industry fell from 59.2% to 46.4%, while the proportion going to public service rose from 11.7% to 20.3%. These are trends of which the Victorian public schoolmasters would have been proud. No doubt the new comprehensive teachers feel the same way. They are just as hostile to the needs of industry in particular, and capitalism in general, as any Victorian schoolmaster or don devoted to the pure world of classical scholarship. The snobbery of one age has become the escapism of another.

[3] Between 1968 and 1976, nearly half of the increase in male university students entered just one subject area—the "social sciences."

I WANT TO EMPHASISE that I am not arguing that this interpretation of Britain's educational changes is the whole truth. I am using the illustration of education to suggest an insight into Britain's current problems. That insight is that the difficulty of solving the problems is greatly increased by the nation's self-deception which enables obsolete attitudes to be re-issued in the guise of "progressive reforms." The result of this escapism is that modernisation is postponed and national characteristics needed to breathe new life into social and economic Britain continue to be overridden by attitudes that served an Empire well but are suffocatingly obsolete in a post-imperial society.

If I am right in thinking that education provides a useful model of Britain's incapacity to modernise by shedding obsolete attitudes, it would be useful to know how the educational reformers persuaded the country at large that their reforms *were* the ones that were needed.

I believe that the answer is that they were able to convince themselves and their fellow-countrymen that what was wrong with the education system that had served the Empire was its social injustice, characterised by them as "élitism." By concentrating on this aspect of the education system, they were able to ignore the *real* anachronism which was the bias in the curriculum, indeed in the whole school ethos, against what might be useful to the trading and industrial society and towards what was unworldly, theoretical, and academically pure.

Social justice was not an ignoble goal, but when its pursuit became an obsession for the reformers the chance of making the more fundamental changes that were needed to free Britain's schools from obsolete attitudes was lost. It is easy to see that what was happening in schools was a reflection of a wider national desire to make social justice the priority once imperial preoccupations had disappeared. Social justice was an attractive ideal. It took the mind off the harsh truth of approaching poverty. It held out hope of achieving a classless utopia. It echoed comfortingly the British belief in fair play. It was an easy consolation prize for a people who had been forced to relinquish world power—a feeling that one is doing good is some compensation for loss of authority. It even allowed the British to perpetuate the illusion of being Head Prefect, giving "a moral lead to the world", setting a good example.

In short, nothing was more natural than that

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the British, confused and weakened by the dismemberment of Empire, should have preferred to pursue "social justice" rather than face the daunting and more revolutionary task of adapting their education, their industrial organisation, indeed their whole economic and social system, from the needs of Empire to the needs of the island trading state. They even persuaded themselves that social justice *was* what was needed to create a vigorous, wealth-producing society. It is only now, very late in the day, that they are beginning to grasp that over-emphasis on social justice may be leading the country not only to spend money it has not got but also to curtail liberty and to undermine those qualities of initiative and enterprise on which a trading state depends.

THE LESSON of the educational model would seem to be this. The reforms that were needed to transform the Imperial power into a successful trading state were avoided by giving priority to social justice. Many characteristics of the social justice reforms perpetuated the obsolete attitudes of Imperial power. Thus the pursuit of an intrinsic good became part of a national self-deception postponing modernisation.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? The Green Paper of July 1977, *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document*, suggested that the Secretary of State was aware of the real anachronism, but the proposals for change were expressed in too general and tentative terms to inspire confidence that the period of self-deception had ended. Both major political parties have set their face against government direction, or control, of the curriculum which is now the only realistic policy for modernising British schools. It would require a combination of vision and political nerve for a British government to tell the teachers that some subjects—mathematics, science, modern languages, technology—*were* more important than others, and that both on the curriculum and possibly in pay differentials these subjects must have priority. But unless a government soon adopts this policy, British education will drift on in its obsolete attitudes until the end of the century.

Opposition to modernisation will not only come from teachers in the state system. The implication of insisting that a core of more important subjects must have priority is that there will be an end to that early specialisation, so characteristic of British secondary education, so brilliantly exploited by the best independent public schools, so rich in possibilities for the pursuit of scholarship—and yet so disastrous for the need to strike a balance between public service and private enterprise, so damaging to the need to ensure that industry and commerce obtain a good share of the more able pupils. The independent public schools will be no more enthusiastic than the state schools about replacing the specialist *A*-level examinations with a broader sixth-form course in which certain essential subjects are compulsory for all candidates. Yet the independent public schools have a vital role to play. At their best they represent the intellectual rigour and respect for learning that the state schools so often lack. If they can show that de-specialisation can be introduced while maintaining high standards of endeavour and achievement, they will have helped to defeat those who are intent on keeping British education locked in the past.

Government "interference" or "direction" on the curriculum would be bitterly opposed. But the demands of modernisation will also require government to take action to redress the harm done by that obsessive pursuit of social justice that we call "egalitarianism." If the country needs critical intelligence, individual initiative, eagerness to compete, it should not be open to teachers to denigrate these qualities by condemning examinations, competition, streaming by ability, and what educationists insist on calling the "pass/fail" concept. It is no good Mrs Shirley Williams asserting in her Green Paper that "The country's well-being depends on its own efforts, and its standard of living is directly related to its ability to sell goods and services abroad"—unless she is prepared to tell teachers to encourage those human qualities that are needed and to abandon the egalitarian cant that leads one comprehensive school headmaster to say that "one jot of humanity [*i.e.* protecting the sensitive feelings of faltering students] is worth a hundred *O*-levels."

FOR ALL TEACHERS "government intervention" in education raises the spectre of totalitarianism. The irony is that unless a government is willing to push through changes such as these, not only in education but also in other areas where obsolete attitudes persist (*e.g.* industrial relations), totalitarianism may be more substantial than a spectre. Unable to halt industrial

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decline and failing to understand why, the British may turn in their frustration to totalitarian solutions. In other words, rejecting a policy of limited government direction to modernise risks total government direction in the form of a Marxian or corporate state. I am not sure that I accept that Britain is as far along the road to Marxism or Fascism as some recent polemical articles have argued, but I do agree with one of the writers that the preventive measure necessary is "wholesale political, industrial and fiscal reform."

MY FINAL ANXIETY is that while the British are at last showing some signs of waking up to the need to throw off obsolete attitudes they may be lulled back into a mood of complacent self-deception by the flow of North Sea Oil. It *could* be that the British will use the wealth from the North Sea to modernise their industry and use the breathing space the wealth affords to modernise their education system. But there is an obvious danger.

The oil wealth is accidental. It may finance industrial and social reform but it does not flow from it. As such it provokes an ambivalence in the British people. The self-deceivers see it as the answer to their prayer: wealth *and* social justice without fundamental reform. The neo-puritans, on the other hand, see the oil as a device of the devil, morally dangerous like an unexpected inheritance in the hands of a spendthrift son. In the particular historical context the neo-puritans have got a point, though it is difficult to see why oil under the sea should be any more morally dangerous than seams of coal, good farming land, or easy access to trade routes.

PERHAPS THE MOST SALUTARY WARNING to the British on the question of their black gold is given by the example of 16th-century Spain.

Between 1500 and 1660 Spanish bullion imports from the Americas (initially all gold, subsequently mostly silver) totalled £250 million calculated at par of sterling. Like the oil from the North Sea it was fortuitous wealth, for a limited period, a windfall that did not flow from the real economic life of the country. The effect on Spain was a brief period of golden achievement followed by centuries of political irrelevance and economic decline from which the country has not yet recovered. The bullion did not stimulate reform or activity in Spain; on the contrary, it actually prevented the Spaniards from grasping the full energy and ruthlessness of entrepreneurial capitalism that characterised their contemporaries in England and Holland. The bullion reinforced the aristocratic hidalgo's contempt for trade and manual labour, and it petrified a social structure that was itself one of the main reasons the country did not benefit from the influx of wealth.

It would be a tragedy for Britain and for the whole world if the British, having failed to shake themselves free from obsolete national attitudes, found those attitudes petrified by the easy wealth of black gold.

The Puritan

Schooled in his youth to believe that sex was bad
he fled from girls when girls were to be had:
Grown wise in age, he stumbled on the truth,
that sex is good—for those still blessed with youth.

Edward Lowbury

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Peregrine Worsthorne

In a Class of One's Own

Thoughts after a Drink (in Boodle's) with "Scotty" Reston

LET ME BEGIN this article on the very old and hackneyed subject of the British class system with at least a wholly new and original anecdote, which is nicely revealing of American prejudice against this much derided social phenomenon. Not long ago, I asked James (Scotty) Reston to have a drink with me in Boodle's, which is one of London's grander clubs. (Where else would be fitting for so august a guest?) When he arrived, rather late, his face was furrowed with concern, not to say distress.

He had, it appeared, asked for directions to Boodle's—grand London clubs have no street numbers, it being assumed that anybody using them will not need such commonplace aids to identification—from a young chauffeur who was waiting in a Rolls Royce for his master to emerge from another club lower down St James's Street. Not only did the young chauffeur cheerfully supply him with the necessary directions, but apparently gave him a conducted tour of clubland, as he escorted him up the street, explaining that the Carlton Club, on the left, was for Tories, whereas Brooks's was for the Whigs, while White's on the other side of the road was non-political, although the smartest club of all, *etc., etc.* There was no limit to the young chauffeur's enthusiasm to impart all the clubland lore, which is why my guest was late.

"But why", I asked, "are you looking so distressed, since surely such enthusiasm and knowledge in a young chauffeur should lift your heart. How encouraging to find a working man with such civilised tastes." At this Reston's look of concern changed to anger. Did I not realise, he almost shouted, how wrong it was for a young man of such obvious intelligence to be happy to remain a chauffeur, waiting outside the clubs about which he knew so much. In the United States, any young man so interested in clubs would insist on belonging himself, instead of only reading about them. "The young man's passive acceptance of his social inferiority", Reston proclaimed indignantly, "is just another example of the iniquities of the British class system."

Now that, to my mind, is a prejudiced judgment, since I do not see anything automatically undesirable about a social system which allows an intelligent working man to be happy with his lot. It could just possibly mean that his lot was such that he had good cause to want to stay where he was. Perhaps he actually enjoyed being working-class, and had no desire to struggle to better himself. If that kind of attitude is indeed the product of the British class system, is it necessarily an indictment of that system? Might it not be to the system's credit?

I DO NOT WANT TO CHEAT in considering these matters. The young chauffeur might well have wanted to better himself if social upward ability was easier in Britain than it is; as easy as it is in the United States. He may well have been deterred from making the effort to do justice to his talents by the knowledge that "making it" here involves learning a new accent and language, a new code of manners, a new style of life, to a greater degree than is the case in any other part of the Western world. In other words, it is probably true that the quantity of will-power needed in Britain to climb the social ladder is greater than it is elsewhere, since a working-class boy will have to change more fundamentally than his counterpart would in less class-conscious societies.

Of course this is not only a question of learning to eat with the right knives and forks. It goes much deeper than that. What is involved is the adoption of a different culture, different values. To some extent this is true in the United States. But not nearly to the same extent, since in

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Britain it is not only bourgeois ways of thinking and behaviour that have to be imbibed, but feudal and aristocratic ones as well. So it is not enough merely to make money. That is only the beginning of the struggle. Over and above that difficult but straightforward challenge are ranged the endlessly baffling nuances of gentlemanly dress and deportment.

That young chauffeur, for example, would not only have had to get the kind of job which would have allowed him to pay the high subscription for London clubs, but also acquire the social knowledge which would make him feel at ease in their aristocratic surroundings.

In this sense, then, the British class system does act to deter all but the most determined working-class young from struggling to escape into a superior station. To an American observer this is both unjust to the individual and harmful to the society, since it prevents the former from realising his potential talents and the latter from benefiting from all that untapped ability.

BUT THE QUESTION which needs to be asked—and seldom is—is whether such a system does not do quite as much good as harm. Let us consider for a moment the situation in a society where social mobility is totally unfettered by the barriers of class. In such an ideal society, all the bright children would rise to the top and all the dull ones sink to the bottom. The hierarchy would be determined exclusively on the basis of merit. In other words, there would be no rich and stupid members within those clubs and no poor and intelligent chauffeurs waiting outside them.

Would this really be a desirable development? Plainly not. To have a society in which those on top all deserved to be there and those at the bottom all deserved to be there too, would be far from socially healthy for either section, since the one would be excessively strong and the other excessively weak. Few can doubt that a much healthier balance is achieved by those on top having to carry a lot of dead wood, which weighs them down, and those at the bottom having to include a lot of untapped talent, which buoys them up. Such a state of affairs makes for a much healthier relationship between the top and the bottom of society, since each group is a cross-section of the bright and the stupid, of the quick and the slow, of the well-favoured and the ill-favoured. A social system that saddles the top groups with a lot of duds and the bottom groups with a lot of stars is likely to promote much more mutual tolerance and understanding than one wherein the sheep and the goats are all in separate pens. It is also likely to be much less oppressive, since each stratum of society will have its own share of the weak and its own share of the strong, thereby avoiding that clear-cut concentration of ability at the top of society and lack of ability at the bottom which would both facilitate and justify the dominance of the one and the subservience of the other.

SO MUCH IS obvious and undeniable. What, of course, is equally obvious and undeniable is that a social system which has too many duds at the top and too many stars at the bottom is also intolerably unbalanced, since this would mean that mobility in either direction had been provocatively blocked, by the presence of excessive privilege for the top dogs and the absence of sufficient opportunities for the bottom dogs. That certainly used to be the case in Britain. There can be no doubt that in the old days upper-class privilege and lower-class deprivation combined to make life at the top too easy and life at the bottom too hard. It was too easy for the former to avoid sinking and too hard for the latter to succeed in rising.

But that is really not the case any longer. The *opportunities* for the ambitious working-class child to climb the social ladder have been enormously increased, thanks to state education and a host of other forms of egalitarian legislation. Contemporary British society really is open to talent. Anybody with talent has an *opportunity* to make it, if they are strongly motivated to do so. And tens of thousands do. The board-rooms of British business are now filled with self-made men, as are the higher reaches of the Civil Service. The present leader of the Tory Party, for example, is the offspring of working-class parents, as was her predecessor. To talk of contemporary Britain as a class-ridden society, in the sense of one still determined by rigid hereditary privilege, as so many American observers still insist on doing, is to talk total nonsense.

WHAT DOES REMAIN, however, is a class system, in a subtly different form, which I would maintain has much to commend it, What shocked James Reston, and delights me,

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is the fact that in Britain there is still awareness of class differences—class consciousness, if you like. The rich and the poor do not merely live different lives materially, but also culturally. Each has its own traditions; its own myths; its own language; its own values. To some extent this is an unfortunate legacy of history, since it leads to conflict, particularly of course in the field of industrial relations. But it also leads to class cohesion and solidarity which means that working men in Britain, more than their counterparts in any other Western society, enjoy being working-class; take pride in that status, and have no desire to avail themselves of the opportunities to become members of the bourgeoisie. The status of working man is not a source of shame. It is a proud boast. When American workers are asked what class they place themselves in, they answer "middle class", since that is how they want to think of themselves. But in Britain, they say "working class", as if proud of it, which they have every right to be.

If this is the heritage of the class system, as it is, then surely it is something to preserve, since it is far healthier for workers to have a tradition of their own, with which they can genuinely identify, than that they should be encouraged, nay indoctrinated—as they are in the United States—into pretending to belong to a bourgeois tradition in which they can never truly feel at home. What is so distasteful, to my mind, about the classless façade of American society is that workers are compelled to think of themselves as middle class—there being no other respectable status—thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to patronage by the real middle class which much enjoys mocking the impostors. The American "hard-hats" or "red-necks" fall heavily and ridiculously between two stools, being neither fully bourgeois nor fully proletarian, cut off as much from the one culture as from the other.

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, then, is far from being the unmitigated evil which many Americans believe it to be. Because all societies are bound in practice to be hierarchical, it is positively desirable that the different social sections should develop and cherish ways of life suitable to their different stations. But this cannot be done without barriers developing which unquestionably have the effect of slowing down social mobility. The existence of a proud working class, with its own traditions and values, must mean that those born within its ranks will find it painfully difficult to climb the social ladder, since such an ascent will require them to make a fundamental sacrifice; to pull up roots which are deeply embedded in fertile soil. Only those possessed of strong ambitions will be prepared to make the effort, which is why the upward thrust is so much less strong in class-conscious Britain than in classless America.

Another reason, of course, is the existence in Britain of a middle class which is much less welcoming to new recruits than its American counterpart, since it, too, has a much more clear-cut sense of its own identity. This can easily be disparaged as mere snobbery. But it is really much more than that. It is the legacy of a patrician attitude which the British bourgeoisie inherited from the aristocracy, with which it merged. But the result of this merger is a British middle class with a far richer culture than that of other Western democratic bourgeoisies, which also has the effect of making it more resistant to new blood. So upward mobility in Britain is slowed down not only by an exceptionally unaspiring working class, but also by an exceptionally unwelcoming middle class.

But the credit side of this situation, to which no attention is ever paid, is that most people in Britain have a much clearer idea of who and what they are than do most Americans. The categories, however, are not such as to justify arrogance on the part of the top dogs or humility on the part of the bottom dogs, since the class divisions so manifestly fail to reflect anything as simple or mechanical as social merit or value. In the old days, again, this lack of what would now be called social justice or fairness in the British class system, was carried to excess. The distribution of power and wealth bore absurdly little relation to individual talent.

But today, as I have already said, this is no longer the case. What is the case is that there are still different ways of life in Britain, each with its own romance and glamour, its own snobberies, if you like. Trade union leaders, for example, although very powerful, do not want to be middle class. Nor does every intelligent worker. They prefer to stay among their own people, because this is where they feel at home.

NO DOUBT THESE FEELINGS militate against the maximum production of wealth, since they help preserve those two-nation attitudes which do so much to engender industrial strife. But they help to avoid another danger which seems to me much

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more fundamentally threatening: contemporary society's failure to allow working people to be themselves. A classless society is for ever pressurising workers to conform to the one culture, the culture, that is, which the university intellectuals and the media approve of. Failure so to conform becomes the mark of Cain. That is very much the American experience today. The "hard-hats" and the "red-necks" are made to seem barbarians. At least the British class system spares its lower orders that kind of humiliation. Feared they may be, with good reason. But they are not patronised.

Since workers there must be, how much better that the social system should preserve a class structure in which they have a place of their own, instead of seeking to blend them into a bland egalitarian mix which deprives them of all their strong flavour, their distinctive taste, and their marvellously indigestible roughness of texture.

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Emily Dickinson Was Right About This

"Art" she wrote "is a house"
Which tries to be haunted"
Always the same choice—
Wake the dead
or pack up and go.
Art is Yes or No.

Even after a lifetime
To move out, admit
"The place was fine,
I liked it
But who came there?"
Staying is nowhere.

Yet all of us stay
Or, at least, most,
Who dares say
He has seen no ghost
And never will?
Truth can kill.

Safer, by far, to wait
In a pleasant room,
Plan, decorate—
It must happen soon.
Get off to a good start.
Patience is an art.

John Mole

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Alan Brownjohn

Afternoon in the Fens

Then the farms ended, and the last dyke
Gave on to reeds, to mudlands; beyond which
A lightship blinked in the haze where the mud became the sea,
And, that afternoon, two black and circling specks
Droned like gnats in that distance beyond our reach.

A dubious peace, the water shrunk down in the channels
Under clumps of bleached, unstirring grass;
A drugged end to August, the dyke-track
Dusty under four people's shoes where we stopped,
Gazing at a high square of wood braced

On a frame of iron in one field-corner.—And suddenly,
Out of the faint waters the two droning dots
Enlarged towards us, two furies homing at this
Target we were standing near on the dyke, coming
Each ninety seconds and screaming and screaming

At the square of orange-painted slats clamped
On black poles of iron rusting into the rich earth,
Laying down fume trails on to smoke from the
Straw-fires lit by farmers affluent on
Their steady reclamations of mud

After two screamings our hands held our ears
As we moved aside along the narrow path,
But the two planes turning again over the flats
Avoided the target, were diving at, screaming at
Us, furrowing the air with billowing smoke-lines,

Homing at the four of us walking this bank
Between farms and land-finish. Out on the far sea
The lightship blinked to no one in the shallows.
And no one elsewhere moved in the fields
Under a sky impenetrably clear, curiously

Dulled by the heat-mists. Again and again,
Turning and screaming ancient, reasonless
Hatreds, they followed; then finally wheeled away, back,
Out over the sea, where the lightship continued to warn
Among sandbanks stuck with wrecks from recalled wars.

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Peter Porter

The Painters' Banquet

They came with their gifts of the senses
And of the groves planted for them by God
In the retina; they knelt by sandy waters
And saw a violin shore, a fronded region
Of high resounding light, rosella afternoon;
They gossiped in laps, lay under umbrellas
Of the tumid shade; they told colours
In every story. When the pelicans glided,
They overcame light, where the daisy unpeeled
They saw graveclothes. There were many
With eyelashes like Veronese's fans,
Others sat solitary as meat on a plate
Waiting for Heaven to happen. Change,
Said some, was the way of their world,
Animals answering the call of light
Under Hyperion's crag. But, said several,
It is the unchanging which we celebrate,
Sirocco survivals, gods hard-pressed
By their abstract eyes. Dangerous modes
In all weather when obsessionals walk
To a favourite spur above the land—
Below them kingdoms boil and they find
Twisting paths through middle space.
This is the sumptuous gallery of those
Who have eaten the world. Oh, the ochre,
Burnt sienna, the pulverising red
Which rocks have earned from the sun!
In little, spaghetti-making towns
The dead artificers' creations burn
All sophistry from pilgrims' eyes.
It was a wonderful party to be at.
We write our thank-you letters
In the world's far-reaching galleries.
Who will clean up now? All the water
In the reservoirs won't remove the stain
From Golgotha. We think back, instead.
Little Andrea has drawn a sheep
With a bright stone upon a smooth-faced rock.
Lucky for him a Medici is passing:
Soon the banquet will be set again.

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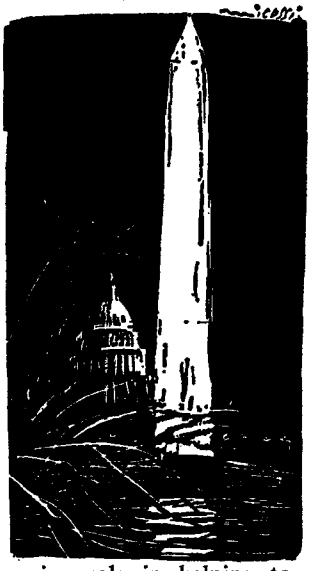
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Manipulating "Public Opinion"?

Polls for the White House, & the Rest of Us

By Seymour Martin Lipset & William Schneider



SINCE THE ADVENT of "scientific public opinion research" in the 1930s, every President has paid attention to the polls. There is evidence that Franklin D. Roosevelt's move to "the Left" in 1935 was precipitated by a poll showing considerable support for potential third-party presidential candidates (Huey Long, Father Coughlin). Louis Harris played a major role in helping to determine John F. Kennedy's strategy in getting elected, and he furnished the White House with intelligence about public opinion following the election. Lyndon B. Johnson was fond of pulling polls out of his pocket to show reporters how favourably he was regarded by the American people—until the polls turned against him, and he against them. The scheming and plotting that led, ultimately, to Watergate began in the summer of 1970, when the Nixon White House became alarmed over polls showing Nixon losing to Muskie in a trial-heat designed to anticipate the 1972 election. The recently published private memorandum by Mr Pat Caddell to President Carter indicates that the current White House pollster has developed an unusually close relationship to the President as one of his chief advisers. It is clear that polls will be taken very seriously by the Carter White House.

There is nothing improper about any of this. No one is going to argue that the government should be run solely by public opinion—but no one is going to argue that the government should be run *without* regard for public opinion either. Before the institution of polling was established, politicians had their own "informal" ways of assessing public opinion—ways that were generally unscientific, often biased, and usually inaccurate. By now polling is recognised as indispensable to political campaigns. While politicians may not be any smarter in terms of how they respond to public opinion, they are at least better informed about how the public really feels. The important question is not whether polls have a place in government—they do—but whether the institutional mechanisms used by the Administration to review and interpret public opinion are as thorough and as reliable as possible. We feel they are not.

We feel this way because currently the assessment of public opinion is filtered to the President through one man who is both a professional pollster and a *de facto* political adviser. We do not question Mr Caddell's credentials in either capacity. To the best of our knowledge, his polls are as accurate as any in the field; and from the evidence in his memorandum to the President, he is a young man of remarkable political insight. But it is a serious mistake to assign all three functions—pollster, political adviser, and interpreter of the state of public opinion—to one person. The reason is that poll results are notoriously volatile, unstable, and subject to a wide variety of "interested" interpretations. Most people believe that if polls are truly scientific, the results should not be open to alternative interpretations, that all reliable surveys should yield similar results, comparable to the results of a referendum.

POLLING, HOWEVER, is more of an art than a science. Design and interpretation are at least as important as the methods used to gather the data. There are enormous variations in poll results which can be attributed to question-wording, to timing, and to the context in which a question is asked in the interview. The most scientific aspect of the whole enterprise is the procedure for drawing a sample; and even *that* procedure allows for sheer random fluctuations from sample to sample. None of these problems represents an "error" on the part of the pollster or a defect in the polling operation. They are the inevitable statistical "noise" which no amount of

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care or quality control can filter out. *To obtain a reasonably valid interpretation of what public opinion is on any given issue, one must undertake a systematic comparison of questions asked with different wordings, in different contexts, in different polls, and at different times*—with no presumption that any single pollster's approach is necessarily more accurate.

MOST POLLSTERS are reluctant to admit that there is so much "noise" and uncertainty in their poll results. This is understandable, since a pollster must sell *his* results as superior to those of competing services. As a result, a pollster inevitably develops a psychological commitment to his own results—"Our poll is more accurate than all the others because we ask the question in a better way." Like any businessman, a pollster quickly comes to have "views" about his product—that his approach is superior, that his ways of asking questions are right (and others' are wrong), that his results are correct and his competitors' are in error. Most of these judgments have no scientific basis.

It is one thing for a pollster to promote his product as a superior means of providing information for a political campaign. But it is something else for a pollster to advance his results in a quasi-official capacity as the most accurate representation of "true" public opinion on a critical policy issue. To the extent that a pollster is committed to differentiating "good" polls (usually his own) from "bad" polls, he is blinding himself to important sources of variation. Official interpretations of public opinion, like official projections of economic trends, ought to take a disinterested approach to the data. Pollsters, like economists, like to think that they are dealing in hard facts. They often fail to acknowledge how volatile—how "soft"—these facts usually are. Yet the evidence of instability in poll results is overwhelming.

THIS POINT MAY BE ILLUSTRATED by a variety of examples. During the Korean War, one of the two leading academic polling organisations, the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago, repeatedly and consistently reported 20% more support for the war than did Gallup, who used a different question. During the Viet Nam War, three leading academic experts on public opinion pointed to a number of major variations in reports of attitudes toward the war, and argued in their book, *Vietnam and the Silent Majority* (1964), that the differences were largely determined by the alternative question-wordings. As they noted:

> "If a question is asked in which negative symbols are associated with withdrawal from the war, people sound quite 'hawkish' in their response. Thus, people reject 'defeat', 'Communist take-overs', and 'the loss of American credibility.' On the other hand, if negative symbols are associated with a pro-war position, the American public will sound 'dovish.' They reject 'killings', 'continuing the war', and 'domestic costs.' Turning the matter upside down, we see the same thing. If positive symbols are associated with war, the American public sound 'hawkish.' They support 'American prestige', 'defense of democracy', and 'support for our soldiers in Vietnam.' On the other hand, if positive symbols are associated with 'dovish' positions, the people sound 'dovish.' They come out in support of 'peace', 'worrying about our own problems before we worry about the problems of other people', and 'saving American lives.' "

THE TWO MOST WIDELY REPORTED opinion surveys—those of George Gallup and Louis Harris—have varied frequently in their estimates of the public's evaluation of incumbent Presidents. In the early period of the Nixon administration, Gallup tended to find higher approval ratings than Harris. Variation in the same direction took place during the Ford Presidency. An extreme example occurred in February 1975, when Gallup asked "*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ford is handling his job as President*", and found 55% approved and 28% disapproved. Harris's results for the question, "*How do you rate the job President Ford is doing as President—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?*" were 46% with "positive" responses ("excellent" or "pretty good"), 52% negative ("only fair" or "poor").

However, the most important variation between the two polls occurred in July and August of this year, as the Bert Lance controversy was developing. It was important for the White House to know whether the attack on Lance was hurting the administration. Harris's findings clearly suggested it was—he found that positive evaluations of Jimmy Carter dropped from 59% in late July to 52% in a poll taken 13–20 August. Gallup, on the other hand, reported a higher positive rating, which did not change during the same period. The percentages voicing approval "of the way Carter is handling his job as President" were 67 in late July, and 66 in a survey conducted 19–22 August. Evidently Harris, who offers the four alternatives including "only fair", elicits a lower estimate of Presidential popularity than Gallup who asks people whether they approve or disapprove; but this does not explain why Harris showed a decline in the summer of 1977 while Gallup did not.

Michael Wheeler, a close analyst of opinion polling, cites Pat Caddell as suggesting that during the Watergate Affair the Congressional impeachment process was slowed up because the Harris Poll indicated on a number of occasions in 1973

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and 1974 that the public did not favour impeachment. Harris asked people whether they favoured Nixon being "*impeached and removed from office.*" But as Wheeler notes,

> "Impeachment and removal, of course, are two different things. In essence, Harris was asking not whether Nixon should simply be tried, but whether he should be tried and hung."

Other surveys by Caddell, Burns Roper, and Peter Hart—which inquired whether Nixon should be impeached so that he could be tried by the Senate—found many more people favouring impeachment than Harris did in his "impeached and removed" question.

THE MUCH DISCUSSED ISSUE of the public's lack of confidence in American institutions may be viewed quite differently depending on whether you read Harris or Gallup. The former, whose results have received the most attention, has asked respondents for many years to indicate how much confidence they have in a large number of institutions, and requires them to choose among three response options: "A great deal . . . Only some . . . Hardly any." Gallup, on the other hand, had given his interviewees five choices: "A great deal. . . Quite a lot . . . Some . . . Very little . . . None." Harris, in effect, has only one positive answer, "A great deal", and two negative ones. Gallup, however, has two favourable options ("A great deal" and "Quite a lot"), a neutral one ("Some"), and two negatives. If we compare the results of the two pollsters for early 1977, it is not surprising that Gallup finds much more confidence in various American institutions than does Harris. Thus, the percentage of respondents having positive feelings towards the military is 23 for Harris and 57 for Gallup. For organised labour, Harris's figure is 14 while Gallup's is 39. For medicine, it is 43 in Harris and 73 in Gallup. Confidence in Congress is expressed by 17% of Harris's respondents and 40% of Gallup's. The Supreme Court gets a positive rating of 29% in the Harris survey and 46% in the Gallup Poll.

The two organisations vary in the terms they use to get reactions to business and religion. Harris inquires about "major companies", and finds 20% positive; Gallup uses two terms and reports 51% having "A great deal" or "Quite a lot" of confidence in "Free Enterprise", while 33% express comparable views about "Big Business." The Harris figure for confidence in "Organised religion" is 29%; while the Gallup one for "The church" is 64%.

WHO IS RIGHT about the public's feelings about American institutions? Is it Harris, whose reports emphasise alienation and whose data averaged for these seven institutions show only 26% expressing "A great deal" of confidence, while an average of 60% indicate that they have "Only some" or "Hardly any" confidence? Or is it Gallup, whose write-ups are more positive and who finds, on the average, twice the proportion, or slightly over half of his respondents, reporting "A great deal" or "Quite a lot" of confidence in these same seven institutions? Conversely, only 17% on the average chose the negative options of "Very little" or "None", while those who gave the relatively neutral middle response, of "Some" confidence, average out to 28%. Clearly, you ask your version of the question and you take your choice. Most people do not want to say that they have "A great deal" of confidence in various major institutions, even when the alternative choices open to them are "Only some" and "Hardly any." But many more figuratively leap to express confidence when they are given a second positive option of "Quite a lot", and only a small minority will choose clearly negative options when, in addition to the favourable choices, they are allowed to pick an ambiguous term like "Some."

CONSIDER AN ISSUE that has very recently come back into prominence—whether Israel should give back the occupied Arab territory captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. A Harris poll of 3,377 Americans carried out in December 1974 and January 1975 asked respondents to agree or disagree with the straightforward statement, "*Israel should give back the territory it gained from the War of 1967.*" Some 25% agreed. In the same survey, a similar question was asked with a new consideration added, "*Israel should just give up the occupied Palestinian Arab territory and let Arafat rule it.*" With the new stipulation, agreement fell to 11%. A 1975 poll taken by Cambridge Survey Research (directed by Pat Caddell and John Gorman) gave yet a different scenario: "*The Israelis ought to give up all the territory they have captured since 1967 if the Arab states agree to peace.*" With the peace stipulation added, agreement rose to 36%, the same percentage as had disagreed.

Several national polls have addressed themselves to the impact of Arab oil on Middle East Policy. In 1975, Caddell's Cambridge Survey Research inquired whether:

> "Since the Arab countries have the oil, American policy ought to figure out ways of becoming their friends."

Some 44% agreed and 40% disagreed. Thus, the argument could be made that Americans are willing to endorse a closer relationship with the Arabs to get their oil. But this question did not

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address the "Oil-or-Israel" choice directly, only by implication. From late December 1974 to mid-January 1975, Louis Harris posed the choice:

> "If it came down to it and the only way we could get Arab oil in enough quantity and at lower prices were to stop supporting Israel with military aid, would you favor or oppose such a move by this country?"

Given this explicit choice, only 18% of Americans favoured "Oil" over "Israel", while fully 63% opposed such a move. In another question asked in his survey, Harris offered the proposition:

> "We need Arab oil for our gasoline shortage here at home, so we had better find ways to get along with the Arabs, *even if that means supporting Israel less.*" (emphasis added)

Only 20% of Americans endorsed this position, compared with over twice that proportion (44%) who felt that we should "figure out ways of becoming friends" with the Arabs when the most obvious way of doing so was left unstated in the Caddell poll.

THE WAYS IN WHICH varying question-wording may yield what appear to be sharp variations in opinion are, of course, known to all practitioners of the polling art. This leads some of them to ask different questions about the same issue in the same survey, the responses to which, if taken alone, appear to suggest alternative images of what the public thinks.

For example, in a recently released study on *Consumerism at the Cross-Roads*, Lou Harris reported that 69% agreed that

> "The consumer movement has helped a great deal to improve the quality and standards of the products and services people buy."

Only 16% of the *same* group of respondents, however, when asked a similar question, not as an "agree-disagree" item but with a number of options, chose the answer that "People active in the consumer movement have done a great deal of good." The large majority, 67%, gave the unenthusiastic, middle-of-the-road response, "Some good." In another, more policy-relevant pair of questions in the same survey, a goodly majority, 58%, rejected increased government regulation of business. But when asked elsewhere in this very detailed analysis of consumer problems whether they favoured the extension of regulation in the form of "a new federal Consumer Protection Agency", 52% supported the proposal while 34% opposed it.

SOMETIMES WE GET a different picture of how an issue affects behaviour when the way in which the question is asked is varied. On Election Day, 2 November 1976, NBC News polled over 15,000 voters as they left polling booths throughout the country. Question 13 on the printed questionnaire asked,

> "Was there any single issue that led you to vote for your Presidential candidate?"

A list of 18 issues was provided, and the respondent was asked to check the one most important to him in casting his Presidential vote. The issue most frequently checked was "Inflation", chosen by 21% of the voters. Those who checked inflation as the main issue voted 58% for Carter and 41% for Ford. Question 21 on the other side of the questionnaire asked,

> "In your opinion, which is the more important problem facing the country today . . . (*A*) Finding jobs for people who are unemployed, (*B*) Holding down inflation, (*C*) Both equally important and (*D*) Not sure."

24% of the voters chose (*B*) "Holding down inflation." This group voted 35% for Carter and 63% for Ford. Apparently we are dealing with two very different issue domains. Concern over inflation seems to have helped Carter more than Ford. Where Ford did well was not among those who were "concerned" over inflation, but among the very different group who endorsed the position *that inflation is a more important problem than unemployment*. Concern over inflation is a generalised sentiment with no strong ideological direction. But there is a very definite conservative thrust to the opinion that inflation is more important than unemployment.

MOST OF THESE DIFFERENCES have been due to variations in question-wording. Sometimes an issue of interpretation arises which has nothing to do with question-wording, but depends wholly on how one chooses to read the results.

In April 1975, the Gallup Poll asked:

> "In the event a nation is attacked by Communist-backed forces, there are several things the US can do about it—send American troops OR send military supplies but not send American troops OR refuse to get involved. What action would you want to see us take if [country named] is attacked?"

In the case of ten of the countries, the very same question had been asked by the Gallup Poll in 1971. The Gallup organisation compared the 1971 and 1975 responses for these ten countries—(West Germany, Israel, Japan, England, India, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, Nationalist China, and Turkey). It issued a press release which was headlined in *The New York Times* (11 May 1973, p. 23), "LITTLE SHIFT SEEN TO ISOLATIONISM." The evidence for this conclusion was the fact that in 1971, the percentage of Americans willing to *send troops* to these ten countries in case of attack

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averaged 19%. In 1975, the percentage willing to send troops remained almost unchanged, an average of 18%. This very slight change—1% fewer Americans willing to send troops in case of attack—was fairly consistent across the list of individual countries. The press report issued by Gallup stated:

> "Despite the recent fall of Cambodia and South Vietnam to the Communists, the American public's views on the extent of United States military commitments abroad offer little evidence of a trend toward isolationism since 1971. . . . The latest survey [shows] that the public's views on United States military commitments are virtually the same as in 1971."

But if one looks at the other side of the question, the proportion of Americans who said we should "refuse to get involved" if these countries were attacked, the evidence shows a notable *increase* in isolationist sentiment. The proportion saying "refuse to get involved" rose 7%, from an average of 32% in 1971 to an average of 39% in 1975. Increased isolationism was evident in the case of each of the ten countries, with the smallest increase registered in the case of Japan (2%), and the largest increase in the case of Turkey (12%). The Gallup Poll presented both sets of answers in its press release; but its interpretation rested wholly on one of them and ignored the other.

SOMETIMES THERE IS NO PROBLEM of either question-wording or interpretation, but simply of the stability of the figures. Many commentators have drawn attention to "the Black vote" in the 1976 election as a key element in President Carter's victory. The Joint Center for Political Studies in Washington looked at election returns from 1,165 largely Black precincts nationwide, and concluded that Carter had won 92% of the Black vote. This figure was on the high side, according to several national polls. Louis Harris estimated that Carter won 87% of the Black vote. CBS News conducted polling-place interviews with almost 15,000 voters on Election Day; in their survey Blacks constituted 9% of the voters and voted only 82% for Carter. In a similar Election Day poll carried out by NBC News, 92% of the 8% of the respondents who indicated that they were Black said they had voted for Carter. The Gallup Poll, however, estimated that 85% of "non-whites" voted for Carter in 1976.

These variations are not really surprising, especially when one considers that we are not talking about variations among samples but across *subgroups* within samples—indeed, subgroups which usually number less than 10% of the voters. A range of variation between 82% and 92% is actually rather small considering the unreliability of figures at this level of detail. Yet the politically relevant question is whether Governor Carter did better among Blacks than Senator McGovern had done four years earlier—that is, whether Carter's appeal to Blacks was any stronger than that of a Democrat who otherwise ran very poorly. The Gallup figures estimate that Carter's support among "non-whites" was actually lower than that of McGovern in 1972—from 87% for McGovern to 85% for Carter.

There is a good deal of political significance vested in the interpretation of such figures. But a cautious and knowledgeable observer would decline to make any interpretation at all.

THERE IS ONE SOURCE of variation in poll results that has received very little attention, namely, the *context* in which a question is asked. It is usually assumed that if a question is asked in different polls but with exactly the same wording, all sources of variation have been controlled for except sampling error and changes over time. Yet there is evidence that the placement of a question in the interview and the overall subject-matter of the interview can make a great deal of difference.

How do Americans feel about defence spending? A Louis Harris poll administered on behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in December 1974 asked a sample of 1,513 Americans: "Do you think that we should expand our spending on national defense, keep it about the same as it is now, or cut back our defense spending?" A third, 32%, said "Cut back." But in *the very same survey*, Harris showed respondents a list of "present Federal government programs" and asked, for each, whether the respondent felt that programme should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same. "Aid to education" was the first programme listed and "defense spending" the second. When asked in this context, over two-fifths, 42%, voted to cut back. When the question of defence spending was posed *in the framework of competing Federal programmes*, sentiment in favour of cutting back rose by 10%!

A more striking example of the "context effect" can be seen in the results of a December 1974–January 1975 Harris survey in which subjects were interviewed for an average of 73 minutes on the subject of Israel and anti-Semitism. The Harris survey included four questions on US military aid to Israel. Each question had a different—and sometimes quite complex—set of conditions and stipulations. Two of the questions were worded "positively" (favouring US aid) and two "negatively." Given

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this diversity, the consistency of responses on the items listed below is remarkable.

4(h) "As you know, the U.S. has sent planes, tanks, artillery, and other weapons to arm Israel. The Russians have sent similar military supplies to Egypt and Syria. In general, with the Russians arming Egypt and Syria, do you think the U.S. is right or wrong to send Israel the military supplies it needs?" *Right* 65%
Wrong 21%

4(k) "If war broke out again in the Middle East between the Arabs and Israel, would you favor or oppose the U.S. continuing to send military supplies, but not troops or personnel, to help Israel?" *Favor* 65%
Oppose 24%

8(e) "Let me read you some statements some people have made about the Arab countries and oil. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree.
(1) We need Arab oil for our gasoline shortage here at home, so we had better find ways to get along with the Arabs, even if that means supporting Israel less." *Disagree* 68%
Agree 20%

8 (f) "If it came down to it and the only way we could get Arab oil in enough quantity and at lower prices were to stop supporting Israel with military aid, would you favor or oppose such a move by this country?" *Oppose* 63%
Favor 18%

These results show a consistent two-thirds of the public favouring military aid to Israel. Results that are so remarkably insensitive to the wording of the questions would seem to indicate a strong and stable underlying attitude.

But the fact is that this two-thirds figure, notably consistent *within* the context of the December 1974–January 1975 Harris survey, is very much out of line with other surveys carried out at almost the same time in which similar questions were asked.

IN OCTOBER 1974, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, Inc. asked a national telephone sample the following question: "The US sends arms and military equipment to a number of foreign countries. Do you personally feel that the US should or should not send arms to [list of ten countries, including Israel]?" Israel was the fifth country on the list, and only 31% of the sample—not quite *half* the figure obtained by Harris—felt that the US should send arms to Israel. Fully 57% felt that we should *not* send arms to Israel.

It should be noted that the Yankelovich question was asked in the context of the *general* issue of "military aid" ("The US sends arms and military equipment to a number of foreign countries"). Moreover, the first two countries on the list were South Viet Nam and South Korea—countries where US military aid is associated with US military involvement—followed by Italy,

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Greece, and then Israel. Support for US military aid averaged 20% for all ten countries (which, in addition to the five cited above, included Turkey, Jordan, Ireland, Saudi Arabia and Yugoslavia). The 31% of the Yankelovich sample who approved military aid to Israel was the highest figure obtained for any of the countries tested. It happens that Harris asked a similar question in a December 1974 survey of "American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy", carried out on behalf of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations: "On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations?" Only 33% were in favour of military aid and 65% opposed—a result very close to the Yankelovich figures and in reverse proportion to the Harris results on Israel in his other poll.

Questions on "US military aid to Israel" appear to involve two quite different signals: Americans have a strongly negative attitude toward *military aid* in general, and a strongly positive attitude toward *Israel*. The response to any particular question will depend on the balance of emphasis between these two signals, as determined by the wording of the question and the context of the interview. It seems that in Harris's Middle East survey both factors had the effect of focusing attention more on *Israel* than on military aid. First of all, the interview dealt largely with Israel and the Middle East, thus establishing a definite context. Question 4(h), the first question that concerned military aid, was asked just after the following sequence of questions:

4(a) "In the dispute between Israel and the Arabs, which side do you sympathize with more—Israel or the Arabs?" (Israel = 53%)

4(b) "Why do you feel this way? Any other reasons?" (Open-ended responses)

4(c) "How would you rate the chances of working out a peace settlement in the Middle East between the Arabs and Israel—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" (Excellent + pretty good = 16%)

4(d) "Going back to the last war in the Middle East in October of 1973, as you recall it, who do you feel started that war—the Arab countries or Israel?" (Arabs = 42%, Israel = 10%)

4(e) "As a result of . . . starting that war, do you think less of them, more of them, or doesn't it make much difference one way or the other?" (Of those who thought the Arabs started the 1973 war, 54% thought less of them, 4% thought more of them, and 41% said it doesn't make much difference.)

4(f) "Which side do you feel won the Middle East war, (*a*) back in 1967, (*b*) in October of 1973, between the Arabs and Israel?" (1967 war: Arabs 5%, Israel 43%. 1973 war: Arabs 10%, Israel 27%)

4(g) "If there were another war in the Middle East between the Arabs and Israel, which side do you think would win?" (Arabs 20%, Israel 35%)

The very next question—4(h), cited above—concerned US military aid to Israel, as did Question 4(k). The questionnaire clearly established *Israel* as the focus of the respondent's attention. Moreover, the sequence of questions leading to those concerning US military aid followed the logic of increasing Arab military success (5% considered the Arabs to have won the 1967 war, 10% the 1973 war, and 20% a possible future war). The lesson here is that one ignores these details of context at one's peril in interpreting survey results.

THE PROBLEM POSED BY sharp discrepancies in the findings of different polls is not a matter to be resolved by an estimate of the comparative quality or integrity of the many survey organisations. For the most part it would seem that the variations in response may be explained by differences in the wording and the context within which questions are placed in the interview schedule; the sample design; and the research procedures followed by organisations, each of which is conscientiously seeking to report the state of opinion. Varying approaches to given topics favoured by each may, however, lead to an exaggerated report as to how the public reacts to an issue. Given the fact that on many (if not most)

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policy matters, a large (often majority) segment has relatively little information or deep interest, it is not surprising that the results of surveys may differ widely. It is often not really possible to know the opinion of the public on many issues, since there is no fixed opinion. There is, at best, usually a set of predispositions; but locating these does not enable us to predict behaviour or the subsequent poll results with any precision, when a proposal turns into an actual policy.

Given the variability in responses determined by differences in survey design, it is hard to believe that outcomes desired by the pollster or the client whom he seeks to impress do not occasionally affect the way research is designed or interpreted. Currently, in reaction to the memorandum from Caddell to President Carter which was leaked to the press, liberal opponents of Caddell's interpretations of the conservative mood of the public have argued that he has a history of telling his clients what they want to hear; that while he previously had reported to George McGovern that public opinion favoured major social changes, now he supposedly tells Carter that they fear change and worry most about inflation. Pro-Israeli groups have feared that Caddell's earlier involvement with Saudi Arabia as a client (and his current connection with some international oil companies) affects his work on attitudes towards Middle East issues.

It is highly unlikely that Caddell or most other pollsters seek deliberately to manipulate their findings. But whether they do so consciously or not, it is clear that every pollster has a stake in believing that his results are more accurate and altogether more reliable than those of his competitors. In a real sense, pollsters—like other businessmen or even professors—have an *interest* in defending their product.

IT IS THIS CONFLICT OF INTEREST which is most worrisome when one pollster has become the primary interpreter of American public opinion to the President of the United States. Pat Caddell may very well be the best pollster in the country, the most intelligent practitioner of political surveys. Yet when we compare his results and interpretations with those of others, it is clear that a variety of alternative evaluations of how Americans feel about various issues is possible.

Looking at the findings of the myriad national, regional, and local surveys, and of the commercial and academic polls suggests that the interpretations made of them (including those of Pat Caddell) are usually more "definitive" than the data allow. The information available to the President of the United States and other politicians should, therefore, not be limited to that presented by one person or survey organisation.

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They should be furnished with the full gamut of findings, interpreted by experts who do not have a stake in the validity of any one poll.

How can this best be done?

ONE APPROACH would be to create an office in the White House, directed by a professional or academic expert on public opinion, to receive and analyse the results of all major surveys. This office should issue periodic reports on the state of public opinion as reported by *all* the polls. It would specifically *not* have the authority, without special authorisation, to commission any new or independent polls. Such an agency would also produce occasional in-depth reports on specific topics as requested by the President.

Thus, for example, the President might request an extensive report on American attitudes toward the energy crisis as reported by all the polls since 1973, or a summary of American attitudes toward South Africa or the Middle East situation. These reports would show all the relevant data on the subject, including trends, variations, and inconsistencies, and make an effort to interpret their meaning. But they should not include partisan political advice or campaign strategy. Studies of "where the Republicans are vulnerable on this issue" or "how strong is Governor Brown's appeal to Democrats" have no place in this operation. These functions are part of a campaign apparatus which is apparently handled quite well by pollsters like Mr Caddell. To prevent any such abuse, and to justify the use of public funds, legislation should be enacted to require that all reports should be made available to Members of Congress and to the press and public—exactly like reports on the economy. The results and interpretations would then be open to challenge by opposition politicians and by outside experts.

Still, many Americans would fear that such an office located in the White House would inevitably create a partisan advantage in favour of the incumbent. Perhaps the greater risk of political abuse is the prospect of a "Public Opinion Czar" becoming a kind of Minister of Propaganda, *telling* the American people how much they like what the government is doing. (After all, it is not unknown for economic reports coming out of the White House to be slanted in favour of the Administration's policy—"You never had it so good. . . . Things are looking up. . . . Our new policy is working.") An alternative approach would be to remove the office from the White House and locate it in some independent agency. The Library of Congress might be able to perform the function of archiving, evaluating, and reporting on public opinion data, much as its Congressional Research Service now does reports at the request of Congress.

AN ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITY is an independently financed office based in Washington and linked to policy research institutions of varying ideological persuasions, such as the Brookings Institution (thought of as somewhat to the liberal side of most issues) and the American Enterprise Institute (often identified with conservative positions). Both organisations enjoy reputations for serious and objective scholarship, and, in fact, each employs some scholars whose sympathies and party affiliations differ from the dominant orientation of the institution. An office for public opinion evaluation operated jointly by Brookings and A.E.I. and financed by the major foundations would reduce the possibility of ideological or political favouritism, though it might not be as efficient as an office in the White House. Whatever the exact administrative arrangement, the essential requirement is that no one involved in such an operation be connected with any polling firm—a requirement which probably means, in practice, that the office be staffed by academic authorities in the field.

The staff and consultants of the office should be charged with publicly evaluating and reporting on the state of opinion as reflected in the results of all the surveys on politically relevant matters. The President, other political figures, and the national committees of both parties should, of course, also employ pollsters to carry out confidential surveys designed to inform them how to "maximise their image" and their support among the public. Pat Caddell should continue to advise Jimmy Carter on strategy; Robert Teeter (an excellent pollster, who has worked for various Republican candidates, including Gerald Ford) may carry out a similar task for the Republican National Committee. Pro-Israeli groups, the Saudi Arabian Embassy, and oil companies will be well advised to hire reputable survey organisations to inform them "how best to handle" Middle East issues, and possibly to "explore in depth" feelings on these matters. But all of them and all of us will be better served if they could also check out the findings of their market researchers with the conclusions of a panel of experts who evaluate and interpret all the available data—much as political leaders, corporations, unions, and others who rely on the advice of staff economists may cross-check such judgments with those of other reputable economists.

The stakes of the democratic process are simply too great to allow one man or polling organisation to be the *voice* of the American public to the President of the United States or others in authority.

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IN THE MARGIN

Journey among the "Ugly Germans"

By Melvin J. Lasky

Four-in-a-Jeep

Berlin

ONE LANDS, these days, not in old Tempelhof where the famous Air-Lift put down a plane with coal and foodstuffs every two minutes around the clock in order to overfly Stalin's blockade of the Western sectors in 1948–49, but in the new airport of Tegel in what is still the "French Sector." Nothing could have surprised me more than the sight of four Russians in a jeep. They were parked in the airport lot, and when somebody in the small crowd surrounding them took a few snapshots they smiled and promptly drew their own cameras and shot back. It all looked harmless enough. They were pleasant-looking young Red Army soldiers and officers, clean-shaven, neatly clad, ties firmly knotted and clasped. A far cry from those ferocious types of 30 years ago or so who glowered and threatened in the face of a menacing lens.

What were they up to? Evidently it is all part of a new phase of the "psycho-war" which rages on one level between East and West Germans, and on another between the Western Allies and the Soviet Kommandatura. For the city of Berlin is still formally speaking occupied by the four victors of World War II. Their representatives continue to meet with some regularity and go through the legalistic motions of "ruling" a split city, with one half behind Ulbricht's *Mauer* serving as the capital of the D.D.R., and the other half belonging to all intents and purposes to the Western Bundesrepublik. The Big Four no longer sit in one jeep, but the vehicles still roll freely across an otherwise iron-clad frontier, the Americans taking regular excursions down Unter den Linden, pausing to take a few snapshots of the Soviet Embassy; and now the Russians make their presence felt by showing themselves outside City Hall, on the Kurfürstendamm, at the gates of the various Allied Headquarters. Always smiling, snapping pictures and posing agreeably for portraits in turn.

A farce? Only for those who think the "Cold War" ended when it became an ideological bore for certain liberal intellectuals who wanted to get on to other matters. Since the dramatic days of the Blockade and the Wall (August 1961), the moves in the East-West struggle for the Spree have been small, simple, but none the less systematic. I remember talking in the early 1950s with Mayor Ernst Reuter, and I expressed my doubts whether the Western Allies, always changing commanding generals and general-consuls, surrounded by foreign correspondents whose political education dates back to last week, would remember in 20 or 30 years time what the basic issues were all about. Would they know what the struggle for Steinstücken was (in which the Western Allies "almost went to war" for a handkerchief-sized enclave of West Berlin along the Havel River), or the battle for the Masuren-Allee (in which they finally reclaimed the Soviet-held radio-broadcasting building in the British sector), or the dozens of conflicts at Dreilinden (in order to keep the flow of traffic moving between Western Germany and Free Berlin some hundred miles behind what used to be known as—although it still is—the Iron Curtain). Ernst Reuter was an optimist. As a former general-secretary of the German Communist Party, and with first-hand experience of Lenin in Moscow, he knew that the wheels of revolution turn slowly. "They never forget", he used to insist, "and they never give up. . . ." Each tiny issue was important. Every absurd technicality had to be watched like a hawk. "Oh, it will be hard for us—we who believe in prudence and moderation and compromise—to wear stony faces and feign implacability. But we will, and we must. I do not believe Berlin will be betrayed, or abandoned. But then no piece of it, and no paragraph of its rights, no matter how ambiguous or dubious, has to be given up. For a Bolshevik chess-master each pawn is involved in the ultimate checkmate. . . ."

I AM, THEREFORE, rather encouraged by the current state of play over the jeeps in East and West Berlin. Ambassador Pyotr Abramassimow is currently protesting against the "provocative" activities of uniformed photographers in the "so-called Eastern sector of the city." The French Ambassador (*Hoch-Kommissar* of the French Sector of Berlin) protested in turn; and the Soviet High Commissioner quickly dropped the "so-called." Was then *Gross-Berlin*, the conquered capital of Hitler's *Reich*, still a four-sector city?

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American GI jeep-drivers don't really recognise the D.D.R.'s Wall—at least since General Clay put the Sherman tanks down into Checkpoint Charlie—and Soviet commissars don't recognise Bonn's Federal rights in West Berlin. The chess match, still over pawns, goes on; and so, in Reuter's spirit, it should.

"The Ugly German"

Bonn

APPEARANCES deceive, and what strikes one as "very German" nowadays is often something which on closer examination has a "Made-in-America" label. Even the phrase which I hear on all sides in the Bundesrepublik's latest bout of hysterical soul-searching—*"der hässliche Deutsche"*—is only an adaptation of the old tag about "the ugly American." Surely in this the Yankee and the Teuton souls are not very dissimilar: they both want to be loved, are ultra-sensitive to foreign criticism, swing from high moments of pride and confidence to low spells of self-critical despair, are either loudly boasting of being the brightest and the best or whimpering about their unworthiness. The Germans even have a classical phrase for the oscillation: *Himmelhoch jauchzend, zu Tode betrübt. . . .* At the moment they are indeed "deathly depressed", or think they are, or say they are; and unaccustomed as I am to diagnosing and prescribing for national psychoses, I found myself quite reduced to silence in a German TV inquest at which half-a-dozen of us foreigners were supposed to hold their nervous hands, listen to the Republic's heart-murmurs, check the faltering pulse-beat on the Rhine.

Why are we so hated? (I didn't think they were.) *Why does everybody begrudge us our new prosperity and parliamentary stability?* (The rich and the powerful are always envied and resented.) *Are we all suddenly neo-Nazis because an old woman smuggles her dying husband out of an Italian war-criminal prison and we don't send him back?* (The Bonn Constitution prohibits extradition, and the whole Kappler case will be forgotten by Christmas . . . and would never have made headlines, indeed, had Richard Burton not played the Kappler role in a recent Carlo Ponti film about Rome and the *SS*.) *Why is it that when we ignore the Hitler past we are condemned for moral-historical blindness, and when we finally make a documentary film about Adolf's career we are accused of nostalgia?* (The film, made by Joachim Fest, is unexceptionably clear in its political attitude, if somewhat weak as a piece of political pedagogy, and there is about as much danger of a neo-Nazi revival as there is of a Hohenzollern restoration.)

What astonished me—even if I found it ultimately rather reassuring—was the open-eared patience the troubled Germans still give to the views of *das Ausland*, the "decent opinions of mankind" as they nicely think, but more often than not a farrago of arrogance and ignorance about all relevant matters of European history and culture. A handsome lady reporter from Sweden said she shared the fury of German youth against an established Bonn régime which hadn't yet come to grips with its past; as if the Swedes had yet faced up to the record of their World War II neutrality, or for that matter the adventures of Gustavus Adolphus or Queen Christina. The young French political writer, reacting to my wordless scowling, quickly interrupted his catalogue of ancient Teutonic sins to concede that of course his own countrymen had not yet really, truly, wisely come to grips with either Napoleon or Robespierre. A correspondent from Washington told a nation-wide audience of millions all about eight letters to the Editor of the *New York Times*; and he couldn't be persuaded that such odd bits-and-pieces didn't reflect the mass conversion of the Americans, even addicted as they are to late-late re-runs of World War II Hollywood films, to the notion that Erich von Stroheim is really running the show on the Rhine.

THE GERMANS TURN OUT to be good losers. They have been importing such debates for 30 years now, and evidently like to come out badly. They feel better when others worry about them. They are, naturally, ill at ease in their unprecedented good fortunes: the lowest inflation rate in the West, the strongest defence force in Europe, the sturdiest currency in the world. What did they ever do to deserve all this? Very little, except to work very hard, mind their own business, refrain from molesting their neighbours, cooperate with their allies, and whisper from time to time that those fearful old greats, Fritz and Otto and Wilhelm and Adolf, were dead and buried.

Who could believe such modesty? I attended a conference at which the plea was made to the

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influential Germans present (*a*) to tell the world the secret of their economic policies, and (*b*) to take the leadership in rallying flagging European societies. Here the English spokesmen, with all flags down and in need of a secret or two, were especially insistent. The Germans paled. They were aghast. It could be that the message as it came through on the Translation Earphones was somewhat garbled; but I doubt it. German history has a language of its own, and most foreigners blithely ignore it. For argument (*a*) the Germans heard the echo of that old fateful slogan of the past, *Am deutschen Wesen wird die Welt genesen* . . . and, with a shudder, wanted no return to the missionary spirit of the past. For argument (*b*) the Germans heard, with or without benefit of crackling earphones, *Führer befiehl, wir folgen* . . . and the echo of that Nazi cry paralyses their hands from taking any unilateral initiatives, from playing any *führende Rolle*.

Poor Germans!—can they do anything right? Lean and hungry in the ruins they were seen as a hotbed of malcontents about to produce new, dangerous barbarians; healthy and wealthy in rebuilt cities they are taken to be undeserving wretches who still are about to bode no good. I confess that I felt decidedly uncomfortable in my role as a Goethean cosmopolitan when, in front of those Cologne TV cameras, I finally burst out: "But you are the best Germans we have! . . ." They are. When I first crossed the Rhine in that dismal spring of 1945 and went on to the rubble of Frankfurt and the skeletons of Dachau, I could hardly allow myself to dream of the return of an orderly civilised social order in that physical and spiritual wasteland. More than three decades later I must be frank and courageous enough to avow that, within the limits of European realism, I could not have hoped for something more satisfactory.

Der hässliche Deutsche, the ugly German? For a whole week now I have been trying to close my ears to the drone of this wearisome topic. In that TV inquest, conducted with such admirable new-German fairness by Werner Höfer, I could not help turning to the others, the Swede and the Frenchman and the Hungarian, and conclude that ugliness is in the eye of the beholder.

AND ON THAT SUNDAY, when the week-end papers arrived from London, there were the reviews of a long feature film shown on the BBC. It was entitled *Right or Wrong: My Country*, and was based on Walther Kempowski's autobiographical novel of his war years in Rostock. At long last a German treatment without Gestapo officers and concentration-camp guards—an ordinary tale of a family, humdrum in its truths. How foolish to believe that in the tangled neurotic complex of "the German question" any balance could ever be redressed! As the reviewer in the *Sunday Telegraph* put it,

> ". . . I was left wondering: if the Germans were as silly, inconsequential and ignorant as that, how did they hold the world at bay for six desperate years? . . ."

That should teach the Germans they can't win. We want our Erich von Stroheims back!

Playing Indian

Frankfurt-am-Main

THE TITLE of the magazine in question struck me as very curious. In London I had just been looking at the two new Trotskyite periodicals of the Socialist Workers Party, girding itself for the pitched battles against Fascists in Lewisham and Scabs at Grunwick—and I had felt "at home", on quite familiar terrain. One was called *The Spark* (for the angry exploited proletarians in British factories), and the other was called *Flame* (to give some fire to the protests of the racial minorities in London). Lenin and his *Iskra* were not far away, nor indeed Karl Marx with his Promethean self-portrait in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. But now in Frankfurt the new Underground newspaper for the militant faithful is called *MOB*. How could this be? Were Germany's present-day revolutionaries giving up a proud tradition? Were they no longer Prometheans, and how could they identify themselves as "Mobsters?" One has to read further in *MOB*. in order to get the full extent of their identity crisis, after the political murders of Bonn's chief State Prosecutor, Siegfried Buback, in April, and of West-Germany's leading banker, Jürgen Ponto, in July.

I am not alone in noting its *Kamikaze* spirit, the note of self-destructive pathos which marks its leading articles. The *MOB* editors clearly know the Dialectical Theory of it all well enough, these "Marcuse's Children" who have been instructed that all protest against the viciousness of Bourgeois Society will automatically be labelled "criminal"—therefore: crime is the proud calling of the just. But do they still believe it? What happens when "*Praxis*" appears to be giving the lie to reality, and nothing (except a few wild isolated acts of foul murder) seems to be going their way?

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Ten years ago they felt the city was theirs. They were "urban guerrillas" (with well-thumbed editions of Fanon, Guevara and Marighella), and they could put thousands on to the Frankfurt streets for a University strike, a Housing protest, an anti-War rally, or a demonstration against Bonn-*Faschismus*. Where had all the flowers gone? Once there were innumerable militants who had (*sic*) "*gefightet*"; and now the hard core was isolated. The story is sad:

> ". . . When the talk turns nowadays to the old days, then it is said: We were too militant, we were too courageous and too brazen, we believed wrongly in the imminent Revolution. . . ."

The *MOB* editor can't deny it: the revolutionary Left has disintegrated, having signally failed to make any headway among the workers in the German factories, and having lost more and more of the sympathisers on "the Scene" as the desperadoes turned to violence. How dispiriting it is that the horrid bourgeois society, which had called their marching ("*Ho-Ho-Ho!*") masses nothing but a mob and now was calling the handful of true militants nothing but criminals, has won yet another round in the historic struggle!

It was small comfort that there were still well-placed friends around with secret sympathies—those who would express "*klammheimliche Freude* (furtive joy)" over the death of class enemies like Drenkmann, Buback, and Ponto—in the academic and intellectual world. What did they know, as they went on living their normal lives on good salaries, of a revolutionary's dark mood of depression after "the murder of Ulrike Meinhof" or the real fears and anxieties (*MOB* is nothing if not frank) as the government mounted its counter-terror offensive of "Pigs?" (*Bullen* is the German word here), just as the collaboration of most of the "reactionary" population is called "faschistoid.")

Could it be that in fighting a sick society they had become sick themselves? *MOB* is distraught with psychosomatic anxieties:

> ". . . the whole of our militancy is being put down to a diseased psyche. To fight the Bulls is to be reduced to bullishness. Pistols and bombs are taken to be nothing but phallic symbols. . . ."

For some renegades they have become the lepers of the Left, and have not only to be isolated but indeed to be reported. "*Ganz schön deprimierend*", writes *MOB*, "very depressing, but all hope is not yet lost." They must find new models, in Italy's far Left for example, which could teach them that in order to be true "Urban Indians" (*Stadt-Indianer*) it is not enough to put paint on your face and go around yowling. There is still time to purge the would-be traitors on the Left, to drive them out of their comfortable chairs.

I read on, somewhat bewildered by the mixed metaphors. Underneath the chairs they would find *asphalt*, and under that they would at long last find the *shore*.

I sought guidance from an editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which has in these days become a kind of Guinness Book of Records of the terrorist underground; and he told me what I had to know. Apparently the new "game" in which the so-called *Sponti* movement of the German University Left is spontaneously indulging itself is called *Stadt-Indianer* . . . the latest fashion in being "red." Faces are painted with coloured stripes, feathers are worn in the hair, and the shrieking is as loud as Geronimo. This is the current form of the "alternative life." The "urban Indians" have little to do with their comrades on the Left who carry guns and plant bombs (and even construct deadly rocket machines like the "*Stalin-Orgel*" which, fortunately, failed to go off in Karlsruhe last week); but they do take some "secret pleasure" in the obituaries of their common enemies. As the notorious Göttingen University obit, so widely reprinted, put it:

> . . . "It is one thing to approve the action, which would be wrong; it is quite another to have a feeling of inner joy that the true murderers themselves were now laid low. . . ."

The Göttingen student leader who wrote this signed himself "Mescalero" The Mescaleros are an Apache tribe of old New Mexico. As no less an authority on the subject than Daniel Cohn-Bendit put it, "Urban Indians dream of the shore under the asphalt. . . ." Their magazine (of which Cohn-Bendit is one of the backers) is entitled *Pflaster-Strand*, the central theoretical organ of those with a longing for the other shore who would defend the golden beaches underneath the asphalt jungle. Evidently one has to know the name of the game.

Machiavellian Guide-Lines

Cologne

THE CLUES, after the Jürgen Ponto murder in July, included not only blood-stained items of clothing found in the abandoned get-away car, but also the political documents. These have become rarer since the high ideological days of Ulrike Meinhof, when theoretical memoranda circulated briskly among the Baader-Meinhof faithful, in and out of prison, in order to keep the line straight on high political

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strategy and tactics. The paper was good, the typing fairly clear (the network of defence lawyers had pretty good secretarial assistance) and the style serious and indeed desperately earnest. Not so these days. The documents recently intercepted are strikingly primitive, and full of curious jokes and strange remarks. It is almost as if the ideas of Lenin and Bakunin were being translated into simple texts for children (or those afflicted, in Lenin's phrase, with "infantile diseases").

One more substantial document which I have just been reading is of very special interest in this connection. It was found in the circle of the German terrorist group which made an abortive attempt, in April 1975, to free the Baader-Meinhof inmates by seizing the West German Embassy building in Stockholm (in the course of which two Bonn diplomats were "executed") and whose leading members have now been sentenced to life imprisonment. The suspicion is that the author is Norbert Kröcher (whose wife, Frau Kröcher-Tiedemann, was "liberated" following the deal in West Berlin to rescue the kidnapped Peter Lorenz).[1]

The gamut of ideological emotions runs from A to Z—from the light-hearted confidence in dealing with the German police's efforts to "bug" terrorists' conversations among themselves (and with their attorneys), to the deadly earnestness of

[1] The recent discovery by Swedish police of a secret Stockholm cache of some two tons of dynamite has led to some pressure to have members of Kröcher's group (among them Swedes, Austrians, Mexicans, all under 30) expelled from the country. Ideologists on the Left naturally rallied to his support, especially when in a Stockholm TV-interview Norbert Kröcher called himself an "anti-terrorist"—for the real terror, you see, is being organised by the Establishment with its system of heartless assembly-lines, murderous automobiles, deathly atom-energy reactors, and ugly environmental spoliation. "Are our methods really criminal, when their violence is only against a few, considering all the violence that is being used every day against so many human beings? . . ."

It is the kind of logical twist that appeals to the mind of Jean Genet, and he published a front-page article in *Le Monde*, (2 Sept.), in which he discovered (not for the first time) saints in the underworld. He could hardly come to any other conclusion if he based himself on the dispatches of Manuel Lucbert, *Le Monde*'s correspondent in Western Germany, who reported on the heroic struggle of a handful of young idealists against a corrupt neo-Nazified police state. "If they are monstrous children, they could be produced only by a monstrous society. . . ."

Meanwhile, the fleeing Baader-Meinhof lawyer Klaus Croissant was being well-treated by the French, allowed to give press conferences and TV interviews; and Bonn has vainly requested information on his whereabouts. The German leader-writer in the *F.A.Z.* is in despair this morning: he sees "the lights of liberty going out all over Europe", mourns the end of post-War French–German cooperation, registers with shock the "psycho-terror" which the coming Popular Front victory is already exercising on Paris behaviour. (Croissant has since been detained by the French Police.)

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Secker & Warburg

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preparing a list of forthcoming "victims." Next to how-to-do-it instructions for the making of explosive devices are lists of capitalist bosses, high police and army officers, and of course "fascist politicians" (which includes almost everybody in politics, excepting always themselves).

The vaunted "dialectic" is never absent. Is the life of the victim "truly worth the general reaction that it will provoke"? One has first to have no doubts at all about what they fancy to be the revolutionary necessity of the assassination. Then the stage is set, and the instructions appear so darkly familiar that one can't avoid suspecting it to be the official scenario. The hip mix of military and gangster jargon is characteristic: Operation "Big Money" (in English) was the code name for the Ponto caper. Great care must be devoted to the study of the victim's daily habits, going to work, *etc.* (as in the Buback murder, when the Solicitor-General of the Bundesrepublik was cut down in his automobile on his punctual way to the office; as in the machine-gunning of Dr Schleyer's four bodyguards—some 300 *dum-dum* bullets were fired—after a pram on a street of his daily route slowed the Mercedes down to a sitting-target standstill). Familiar, too, is the suggestion here for the use of motor cycles —the Buback assassin used a Suzuki (which has since become an underground verb: "to *suzuki*" means to "bump off")—not least because the normal attire of the motor-cyclist lends itself to effective disguise. The suggestion is also made for the employment of "spies" in the immediate entourage of the victim (and here the reminder is of the god-daughter of Ponto who, carrying flowers, led the killers into the house on a cordial visit).

The documents' recommendations include the use of machine pistols and hand grenades. Hand guns are less useful since they call for a fairly close approach (and in such "intimate" circumstances there could be the danger of a failure of nerve). "Get-away" instructions include the warning not to get away too fast or too far, to get lost in town, *etc.* For the rest there are the usual crime-story details about changing clothes, leaving no bloody clues, burning whatever might prove incriminating.

THERE IS ALSO an interesting second category of persons on the Terrorist List—these are "spies" and "traitors" within. Not a few have come from the ranks of those radicals who are "*auf der Nadel* (on the needle)", and addicted users of drugs have to be watched carefully. In any case, the memorandum recommends:

> ". . . whether they are spies (*Spitzel*) or traitors, they must be liquidated! (*Sie müssen liquidiert werden!*) This is only self-defence. They've made their bed, they must lie on it. . . ."

Nevertheless, the instruction also emphasises great caution before actually "putting a bullet through the traitor's head (*man sollte sich Gedanken machen, bevor man einem 'Verräter' eine Kugel durch den Kopf jagt*)." Should, however, the *Denunziant* be discovered and caught, red-handed so to say, then he just has to be "bumped off" (*umzulegen*). Nor is this without its positive advantages. For, "as good old Grandma Mao says: punish one—educate hundreds." Was this the educational motive of the "pure" punitive action that was involved in the Buback case (where no "practical purpose" was served as in the prescribed pattern of kidnapping, blackmail, and the freeing of hostages)?

That curious phrase about "*die gute alte Oma Mao*" has interested the more literary among the West German analysts of terrorist texts. Is it evidence of a new non-ideological snippityness when even their own once-revered heroes are treated lightly, even disrespectfully? Things weren't quite so in the earlier days when tons of paper were used up in disquisitions about the onset of a "pre-revolutionary situation" in late-capitalist Western Europe. The "Palestinian model" was studied in detail, and the differences between the "incompleted Marxist-Leninist transformations" in both the Soviet-Russian and the Maoist-Chinese cases. What, then, is the current role of the terrorists on the urban guerrilla scene? Does it still have anything remotely to do with ideology? It may be now only an activistic trigger-happy shoot-out with the "Zombies" or the "Pigs"; but somebody evidently still remembers good old Mao as if in a dust-ridden ancient family album.

CHILDREN AS THEY ALMOST ALL ARE of Germany's post-War educated middle classes, they try hard to become "new persons", rejecting the old cultural characteristics. But how hard that is! The author of the Memo offers guidance about false passports, and committing faultlessly to memory every alias, the different dates-of-birth, addresses, time of military service in the *Bundeswehr*, *etc.* And then he says, touchingly, "we must know all this by heart as well as we can recite Schiller's *Räuber*. . . ." They all still have, in more senses than one, well-schooled memories.

Playing the new role effectively is not, then, so very easy. How simple and dramatically pleasureable it was for Ulrike Meinhof to shed her attractive lady-like Hamburg appearance and slip into the West Berlin underground in shabby blue-jeans! Nowadays, as the Memo warns, the

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"*Anarchisten-look*" has to be avoided at all costs. Not even in their safe conspiratorial houses—especially if equipped with a built-in *Volksgefängnis* (a "People's Prison")—should there be "revealing posters" (Mao, Che Guevara, *et al.*). It would also be better if one's hair were not worn so long. Advisable would be an Army crew-cut; and a plain suit or dress from a department store peg. Public transport, and not stylish automobiles (the Baader-Meinhof gang had a fatal attraction to the fast, expensive BMW), should be used, although from time to time a car will have to be stolen (the word *enteignet*, or "expropriated", is preferred).

FOR THE REST, THERE IS little that would surprise a reader of Conan Doyle or John Le Carré—how to set up a "mail drop" network, how to give a tail the slip, how to deal with the snoopy cop on the corner, what to include in the "emergency flight bag" (was it the role of the females to sew the necessities into the inner linings of the waistcoats?). . . . Some maps are better than others, and the best publishers are recommended (the Lorenz kidnappers must have had a very good guide to the attics and cellars and sewers of West Berlin, and the Schleyer kidnappers knew their Cologne city grid by heart). Some locks are more difficult to break than others, and special techniques are offered. All telephone "bugs" are detectable, and the give-away sounds are described. But above all there is attention paid to ordnance, to the armoury of weapons at their disposal including the so-called "Baby Bomb" (how to strap it around your midriff and be able to pass, with due respect, as a pregnant mother). And when all else fails—the bullet, the Suzuki, the cartographical get-away route—then this is what has to be done when you wind up behind bars (*im Knast*). Above all, be patient and long-suffering—for "some time or another" will come the day of "liberation." And in quite perfect timing the Baader-Meinhof prisoners broke off their hunger strike in the week Schleyer was taken hostage.

HERE, THEN, IS the "new Machiavelli", a revised guide-book for princes (and princesses) of the terrorist underground. But Machiavellianism had to do with the exercise of real political power, by the Medicis or whomever; and whether in Renaissance Florence or in Tito's Serbian mountain strongholds, in Castro's Caribbean or Marighella's South America, there was a full relationship between means and ends, between ideals and strategy, between ideology and (in the new flip phrase) *praxis*. What happens to an underground when it has lost all dreams of ever coming overground?

Some lingering tones of the old ideological impetus remain, even a note of old-fashioned populist ethics. They like to think of themselves as Terrorists of the Left, who have absolutely nothing in common with "Fascists." Accordingly as the author of the Memo emphasises, the victims must never be "the simple folk among the people (*niemals einfache Leute aus dem Volke*)." But when Buback and Schleyer were set upon in Karlsruhe and Cologne six others were killed: chauffeurs, body-guards . . . . Workers? Simple folk? This is evidently proving a puzzlement for the would-be moralists of mayhem. I am told that discussions are supposed to be raging on the terrorist scene over this oldest dilemma of modern political violence: as in the Cromwellian-Stuart debate, when is *Killing No Murder*?

Be that as it may. Still, filled with dismay and revulsion at the whole theory and practice of Left Fascism, one cannot help wondering: how is it that in all the world-wide uproar about "the Ugly German" it is never the Teuton as Terrorist who is meant, never all those young (and often blonde and blue-eyed) fanatics who, as in some Neanderthal throwback to the bloodsports of the past, kill without compunction and would canter over corpses? No, in the current manipulated propaganda campaign—Golo Mann in a newspaper interview today says he is reminded of "Goebbel's ingenuity" in the orchestrated attempt to isolate the liberal West German republic—the accusing finger is always pointed at some little and fairly harmless fellow who is singled out for opprobrium. A Munich tourist abroad, a shade too loud and flamboyant as he flings his D-marks around; a troubled Bonn official who goes too far and "bugs" somebody suspicious in the hope of detecting yet another murder plot; a Frankfurt columnist who thinks that the main enemy today is not on the neo-Nazi Right but on the neo-Marxian Left. Mistaken, or ill-advised, or rude they may be—but *hateful*? The smoke-screen of "*der hässliche Deutscher*" serves only to cover up what is truly ugly, evil, and dangerous in Germany today.

The Metaphysics of Murder

Hamburg

IS ONE BEING too one-sided and emotional? Does one lose one's objectivity if one happened (as in my own case) to know the victims? I met Gustave Drenkmann when he was a young socialist lawyer in Berlin; I talked with Siegfried Buback in Stuttgart when doing research for my *New York Times* (and ENCOUNTER) article on the Baader-Meinhof gang; I shared a

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round-table discussion programme last year with Jürgen Ponto in Bremen. "But", my friend on *Der Spiegel* tells me, "one mustn't get excited, one must avoid all hysteria. . . . " True enough. This afternoon on the boulevard I ran into an old acquaintance whom I hadn't seen in 20 years; he had in the meantime become a prominent (and highly controversial) TV commentator. We went to a nearby café for a drink. I paled, and my mouth parched, as I noted at the next table two men whose bulging jackets opened as they reached for the peanuts and there was a full view of two large black pistols in brown shoulder-holsters. Not to worry, I was reassured; they were the body-guards, always there, around-the-clock. This is the way he lives now.

So, *sine ire et studio*, I have been trying to listen to the rumbles on the other side of the hill. First, the voice of Erich Fried, poet and militant, who feels outraged that his latest piece of verse—it was referred to in the October issue of ENCOUNTER ("Of Murder and Secret Pleasures")—should have been so misquoted and misinterpreted. He is no terrorist, and abhors assassinations. But he also rejects the anti-terrorists, and even-handedly abhors those who would raise a witch-hunt against so-called assassins. As a friendly newspaper (on the occasion of Fried's recent award of The International Publishers Prize) put it,

> ". . . his has been one of the most persistent and effective voices raised against the panicky reaction of German police, press, and courts to terrorism, a reaction which has been used ominously to extend discrimination against the Left. Like Heinrich Böll, he would like to feel quite confident that the Federal Republic, if hardly now a land of *Dichter und Denker* (poets and philosophers), isn't going to slide once more down the slippery old slope in the direction of the *Richter und Henker* (judges and hangmen.)"
>
> W. L. Webb, in *The Guardian* (5 May, 1977).

My own impression of his writings is that he is convinced that it is, indeed *must* be, sliding down that old slippery slope; and that he would never in his born days "like to feel quite confident" that a bourgeois German Society could be otherwise. But I must not be less than fair. I register the fact, as he records it in today's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (1 September), that it was all a typographical error, that in his poetry, as in his politics, he is against blood and barbarism; and his fear as he records it in this week's *Spiegel* (5 September), that if things go on this way, everyone on the Left will be stamped with the label of political murderers "in order to destroy them all. . . . "

Second, the voice of Hans Magnus Enzensberger, poet, militant, and keeper of the true conscience of German radicalism, who feels that the mounting campaign of criticism of Left ideologies amounts to "a criminalisation of thought and feeling", that soon the very attempt "to comprehend contemporary reality" will be censored and suppressed. Preoccupied as he is with the struggle against the vile, reactionary, repressive and quite uncultured Bonn republic, he leaves us in just a little doubt about exactly how he, in turn, feels about blood and assassination. Presumably he is against them too, especially when he feels (as he does say) that there is no need to "liquidate" since "ridicule can also kill."

THIRDLY, there are the slightly revised views of those Gold-Dust twins of '68, Dr Herbert Marcuse and Rudi Dutschke, presented in the current issue of *Die Zeit* (16 September) as if their passing condemnation of the recent horrific acts of individual terror represented some kind of moral and humane conversion. "Murder", writes Dr Marcuse, "should not become a political weapon", and Dutschke now announces that "our criticism of Terror must be made clearer." Their criticisms are not fundamental, only *tactical*; assassinations won't *work* in advanced West European societies, even if they do serve effectively elsewhere (Spain, Latin America, etc.). The troubled German progressives appear to be so grateful for every little re-formulation which seems to suggest that, deep down, somewhere, the ideology of the German Left has an abhorrence of blood flowing on the streets. But here are spirits who have spent all their days hurling imprecations at a corrupt social system that had to be "smashed"; they wanted "fascistoid" reactionary ruling classes to be "eliminated" (or "restructured", or "transcended"); the old world had to give way to the new even in pain and suffering. They are like a clique of shady doctors who have sworn an apothecary's oath to poison no one, but go on freely dispensing wildly powerful concoctions which bear no proper labels and no carefully limited dosages. They still long for the Revolution, the day of the destruction of the hateful old order, on the obscenely naive supposition that only nice chaps like themselves would emerge to take and consolidate the total new power. They repress memories of Robespierre and Stalin, of all the "necessary murders" which have bloodied the past record of violent revolutions, and dream on of utopian magic. Their heads may still be in Arcadia, but their feet go on marching towards the Gulag Archipelago.

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FINALLY, THERE ARE the voices of those German university professors, in Bremen and Berlin and elsewhere, who were convinced of the public importance of that *"Mescalero"* document (in which a Göttingen student leader, abhorring the idea of making a revolution with "Al Capone-like killers", still recognises that the brave new world won't ever come bloodlessly and therefore expresses his *klammheimliche Freude*, his furtive pleasure and satisfaction, at the news of yet another corpse littering the Bonn corridors of power). The professors banded together, at no risk at all of losing their chairs and their state pensions, to make a public demonstration for "Mescalero" by reprinting the text. They added to the pamphlet they published an old historic piece by Rosa Luxemburg (1905) in which, deploring (as all good Marxian revolutionaries have always done) "Individual Terrorism", she expressed her open pleasure at the assassination of that "Muscovite mad dog" Sergius Romanov. Were, then, Buback, Ponto and Drenkmann all mad dogs? Was 19th-century Tsarist Russia at all comparable? Wasn't it possible, permissible and indeed well-nigh inevitable to abhor individual terror and political murder (as Marxism instructs) and *still* to approve collective terror (as Marxism never forbids): *i.e.*, a proper purging of whole classes, a legal liquidation of all oppositionists, a constitutional consignment to "the dust-bin of history" of those who think and feel differently? . . . This is the tragic crossroads, the point of fateful ideological ambivalence which, for all those utopian revolutionaries who took a wrong turning down the path of political deceit, moral self-deception, and downright intellectual dishonesty, led straight to the "Finland Stations" of Lenin and Stalin, of Mao or Tito or Castro.

I note, according to the tape-recorded text of an interview in *Der Spiegel*, that when one academic spokesman for the 43 professors was confronted with such questions—and also about the "manipulation" involved in not letting all the signatories know in advance that Rosa was being tacked on to Mescalero for good measure—she (Heide Gerstenberger, 36, Professor for the Theory of Bourgeois Society at Bremen University), who had pleaded the importance of discussing all disagreeable contemporary issues and avoiding none, replied: "This is not something we want to discuss with you at the moment. . . ." But Mescalero's apology for violence, with all its grisly confusions, had been pronounced *relevant*; for it argued at one point that although the militant on the Left "must not be a killer, a *brutalo*, a rapist, neither should he be a saint or an innocent lamb." How much, then, of unsaintly guilt were they prepared to

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Alexander Portnoy: Exalted porno yarn.

Hercule Poirot: Oh true policer.

Humbert Humbert: Rub them, rub them.

Lolita: Lo! Tail!

Madame Bovary: A very bad moma.

Moll Flanders: Small fondler.

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rationalise in the hard struggle for a better world? How many dead are to be reckoned in costing the Revolution—a hundred, a thousand, or (as Gorky asked Lenin in 1917) a million or two?

It is no accident that in the give-and-take of the turbulent German scene, the ideological debate begins to take on occult theological accents. Subjects under discussion turn out to be undiscussable. Guilt is a form of innocence. Texts are not to be taken with a word-for-word literalness. Or, as Wolf Biermann likes to sing, telling the truth can be a way of telling lies.

I FEEL SORRY FOR Chancellor Schmidt's government which has just announced that it is appropriating several million D-marks in order "to intensify the intellectual debate" and "to define and refute the philosophical presuppositions of the ideology of violence." I wonder whether pamphlets will help very much. What they probably need is more bodyguards who keep their jackets buttoned over their pistol holsters and know every street-corner in the city grid as well as those young experts in the theory of bourgeois society who memorise their Marighella and can recite Schiller's *Robbers* by heart. As Karl Marx once said of Hegel and Fichte, when the Germans are physically helpless their minds turn to metaphysics.

Over the Border

Berlin

YET ANOTHER East German writer was dumped over the border today. This morning it was the young poet Sarah Kirsch who had been "*ausgebürgert*" (that hateful old Nazi term for the punishment which drove Thomas Mann, Carl Zuckmayer, and thousands of others into exile during the Third Reich). Expelled from the Party and deprived of her citizenship, she was forced to leave the D.D.R. and fend for herself in the capitalist West. She now joins Reiner Kunze and Wolf Biermann—and some hundreds of others (one newspaper publishes all the prominent names of East German cultural life who have been forced to take to the West since 1953, and it fills three columns)—as involuntary refugees. "Exile" is the penalty for having signed a polite petition asking the S.E.D. central committee to reconsider the regrettable decision not to allow Biermann to return from a West German tour last November. For Kirsch and Kunze, with that special sentimentalism which German culture has always lent to *die Heimat*, it was a crushing blow to lose their "homeland." They were only crossing an artificial frontier, drawn up by victorious Allied generals on a map of the divided, conquered *Reich*, and found themselves among their own people and their own language; and yet they wept at being in a foreign land, in *Exil*. For Biermann it was even an unkinder cut, he who had always sang the praises of "the better Germany", who roared out his indestructible confidence in the victory of wonderful communism ("*So oder so, die Erde wird rot*"). Not being able to return "home" (actually he's from Hamburg, son of a Communist worker) was tantamount to killing him ("*Ich bin ja getötet worden*"). He began publishing his *Nachlass*, his "posthumous" works. How peculiar!

The more I try to puzzle out the meaning of all this—it is called, in an unilluminating and ungainly German phrase: *die deutsch-deutsche Beziehung*—the less I seem to be able to come to grips with it.

Think of it: if every able German cultural figure, young or old—philosophers like Ernst Bloch, literary critics like Hans Mayer, playwrights and actors (almost every young favourite of Bert Brecht)—had gone the other way, *i.e.* from West to East, from the repressive Bundesrepublik to the progressive socialist state happily building a humanist future, it would surely have spelled out the Spenglerian doom of the declining old West. Not a child would have had any doubts: East good, West bad. Lenin said it: people vote with their feet. But a very funny thing happened on the way to Wolf Biermann's world-revolution: the dialectic got twisted. What a trick of history that the new culture should be forced to seek asylum in the decaying ruins of the old! Interrogated, harassed, arrested, rejected, its best spirits have slowly come to recognise that the "better Germany" was in fact less good: less tolerant, less humane, less free. The Marxist philosopher from Leipzig, Ernst Bloch, used to say—even, I am told, to the last days before his recent death at the age of 90—that "the worst communism is still better than the best capitalism." But he lived out his life, after the Berlin Wall in 1961, in the West, enjoying the best bourgeois freedoms that the University of Tübingen had to offer. What is there about the German ideology these days that induces such paranoia? Two Faustian spirits still flit about in the national soul—the Eastern spirit full of Mephistophelian sturdiness, the Western spirit plagued by doubt and negations.

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I SUSPECT that the neuroses afflict not only the intelligentsia but the power élite as well. There was nothing about any of these expellees which could sensibly frighten or alarm so powerful a police-state as the D.D.R. The single recorded protest on the "human rights" issue (that ill-fated pro-Biermann letter which got them all purged) was a mild, hat-in-hand petition. There are no audible voices in East Germany with the moral force and intellectual honesty of a Solzhenitsyn and a Sakharov in Russia, a Michnik in Poland, a Goma in Rumania, a Kohut and a Havel in Czechoslovakia. And yet the Honecker government, so proud of its productivity and stability (and Olympic gold-medal prestige) that it could promise, only a few years ago, liberalisation and cultural relaxation, shakes now at the prospect of a few slightly dissident voices. Biermann poked a little childish harmless fun. Sarah Kirsch once wrote a sad poem about Julia and Romeo, divided by the two sides of the German-German frontier. Thomas Brasch had a character in a novel who from time to time moaned of asphyxiation and dreamt of an explosion which would level old rubbish and clear the air. Reiner Kunze's verse suggested that life was a vale of tears. Subversive spirits? Counter-revolutionary threats? Hardly.

And yet they shake. Perhaps they are wiser than we know, and have shrewdly set their faces against the slightest signs of an "enlightenment" which always precedes a revolutionary upset. The choice, as Wolfgang Harich put it in a conversation in East Berlin the other day, is a simple and primitive one: between horrid "pluralism" and the "authoritarian power-structures of socialism." Consequently, as his advice runs (*Stern*, No. 37, September 1977, p. 146): *Macht das Tor zu und haltet die Mauer dicht!* Close the gates and keep the Wall impenetrable...

Except, of course, for those Russian jeeps that cross into West Berlin and, with a smile, remind us of the structure of ultimate authoritarian power; not to forget those American GIs who still come through the hole at Checkpoint Charlie and, with a snapshot here and there, remind them that Uncle Sam is still watching. But this is where we came in.

The Change

Unwanted days surround me,
as in a cafeteria:
congealed autumn with cold eyes,
ominous, and sloshy.

The delicious lashes and long tail
roll-calling round at dawn
bucking away or licking salty hands
have lost their personal taste:
these ladlefuls of Something
might have eaten Anything.

But further off the fauna of time still
wander uncaught,
twin days, Siamese weekends, timid mornings;
interested afternoons
catch whiffs of us thinking of them;
they hear us in the leaves beginning
our joint work on common months,
till now completely unstudied.

The water in our mouths runs again.

Alistair Elliot

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Organised Violence

On Military History—By CORRELLI BARNETT

WITH THE 19TH-CENTURY TRIUMPH of liberalism and its faith in moral and material progress, educated opinion in English-speaking countries came to see war as an aberration, a breakdown in the natural harmony between men (that is, "peace"); a relic of our barbarous past. For conflict to the point of armed collective violence hardly accorded with liberal faith in mankind's essential goodness and rationality. Moreover, war's incidental cruelties and sufferings affronted the non-conformist conscience, spiritual arm of liberalism. Hence war, though an institution central to the history of western civilisation, came to be either dismissed as meaningless and regrettable violence, like a punch-up in a bar, or denounced along with drink and fornication as an "evil." It is therefore not surprising that the study of war and of military institutions has never attained the status of a ubiquitous university discipline like economics, say, or economic history, or sociology. Yet notwithstanding liberal prudery on the topic, war, like sex, is, even if rude, a major human preoccupation; and, again like sex, stimulates a vast literature.

No conflicts exert a more potent fascination on the academic and the reader of strip-comics alike than the World Wars of this century. Dr Gwyn M. Bayliss lists no fewer than 2,400 bibliographical guides in his invaluable new source for scholars, *Bibliographical Guide to the Two World Wars*,[1] while S. J. Mayer and W. J. Koenig take nearly 300 pages to list British primary sources alone in their *The Two World Wars: A Guide to Manuscript Collections in the United Kingdom*.[2]

Dr Bayliss must be congratulated on the immense and painstaking work which has resulted in a supremely useful scholarly *Guide Michelin*, containing comprehensive specialised sections devoted to every facet of the subject—from the politics of war to all aspects of technology, from art and literature to biography; from dictionaries of military terms to sources specialising in regional or national material. Nor does he omit a guide to films, photographs and sound recordings, those latest aids to research. His book is excellently laid out for convenient reference, the index being classified into authors, titles, regions, countries and topics.

The Two World Wars: A Guide to Manuscript Collections in the United Kingdom by Mayer and Koenig, although a useful tool for the historian, especially in listing small collections scattered in regimental or provincial museums, falls below the standard of Dr Bayliss's book both in accuracy and layout. While all scholars will sympathise with the authors over the problem presented by checking facts and proofs in so complex a work, solecisms like omitting "Drax" from the surname of Admiral Sir Reginald Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax, or giving the dates of Sir Thomas Inskip's tenure of office as Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence as 1938–40 instead of 1936–9, or listing Attlee as "Atlee" are hard to forgive. The method of listing personages is confusing and inconsistent: for example, we find "Field Marshal Frederic Rudolph Lambart" as a main heading, and then beneath in the running text "10th Earl of Cavan", the name by which he is more usually remembered. But elsewhere titles rather than family names are given as headings. Moreover the index is not classified but a pantechnicon.

NEVERTHELESS THE SCOPE of the sources listed by Mayer and Koenig serves to remind us that total

[1] *Bibliographical Guide to the Two World Wars: An Annotated Survey of English Language Reference Materials*. By GWYN M. BAYLISS. Bowker, £15, $30.

[2] *The Two World Wars: A Guide to Manuscript Collections in the United Kingdom*. By S. J. MAYER and W. J. KOENIG. Bowker, £12.50, $25.

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war demands "total history"—that is, the study of economic and social policy, technology, literature and propaganda as much as grand strategy or campaigns. Indeed all wars in history really require this "total" approach, for, as Clausewitz and his disciples Lenin and Mao have taught us, war is a social and political phenomenon, and one which in turn profoundly shapes the development of society. When approached in this light the historical study of war and military institutions becomes a social science of the first importance rather than the backwater of almost antiquarian interest which military history was for long regarded as, and to a considerable extent still is. Yet responsibility for the low academic status of military history lies not only with liberal humanism's disdain for such a topic as organised violence, but also with past military historians, who have rarely seen war in its social context. Instead they have restricted themselves to analysing the conduct of military operations themselves, often in needless and tedious topographical detail. They have treated war almost as a game of skill played for its own sake, dissecting the performance of the competitors like cricket commentators at a test match. They have discussed military organisation and military institutions as if these were self-contained entities rather than aspects of a larger society.

Colonel H. C. B. Rogers' new book, *The British Army of the Eighteenth Century*,[3] freshly illustrates the virtues and limitations of traditional military history. The first half provides an informative and workmanlike account of the system, if such it can be deemed, of military administration from Marlborough to Wellington, and describes how the army itself was recruited, trained, disciplined, paid and organised; how, indeed, the army was not so much an army in the European sense as a collection of self-contained regiments run by their colonels almost as private entrepreneurs; and how expeditionary forces were supplied and administered in the field. In the second half of the book Colonel Rogers portrays three of the 18th-century army's commanders in action—Marlborough, Amherst and Howe—and describes four of its battles: Ramillies, Fontenoy, Camden and Guilford (the last two fought against the rebel Americans). Unfortunately the author's dry recital of fact fails to bring his chosen commanders to life or give us any insight into the reality of an 18th-century battle as it impinged on general and private soldier alike.

Moreover, Colonel Rogers says little about the long and politically important controversy in Georgian England over the rival merits of militia and regular army; little by way of analysis of the social or regional origins of officers or rank-and-file, and how these origins altered during the century, if at all. He does not describe, but only mentions, the use of regular troops as a police and anti-smuggling force. As a military historian in the traditional mould, he tells us little, if anything, about the economic or human relationships between billeted units and their civilian host communities; about the impact on agriculture of military purchases of beasts, forage and waggons; about the interacting effects of technological progress and military needs; about the impact of military requirements—clothing, weapons—on the burgeoning industrial revolution.

UNTIL AFTER THE Second World War it was largely left to private individuals to make good the neglect of war studies in the universities. In the 1920s and 1930s two men established themselves as national pundits on things military—Major-General J. F. C. Fuller and Captain Basil (later Sir Basil) Liddell Hart. Both form the subjects of new critical studies. Anthony Trythall in his *"Boney" Fuller: The Intellectual General*[4] describes a man astringent of mind and personality who made a reputation as a prophet of future warfare (armies composed solely of tanks and tracked transport, supported by aircraft), retired from the army in 1933 because he had fallen foul of military conservatives in high places, compromised his influence by his fascist sympathies, and ended as a historian of challenging originality, if not always of exact scholarship. In my opinion, we have to thank Fuller more than any other person for beginning to drag the historical study of war out of the backwater of traditional military history into the mainstream of intellectual life. His *Decisive Battles of the Western World* and *The Conduct of War* constitute pioneer ventures in strategic history—that is, war in its political, social and technological context—and it is surely as a strategic historian that he will be lastingly remembered and valued.

Brian Bond's *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought*[5] explores the more complex of the two men, and, in his lifetime, the more influential. Dr Bond, like myself and other historians of our generation, was the recipient of much kindness and encouragement from Basil Liddell Hart, and hence was not perhaps in the easiest of positions for writing a personal study

[3] *The British Army of the Eighteenth Century*. By H. C. B. ROGERS. Allen & Unwin, £6.50.

[4] *"Boney" Fuller: The Intellectual General*. By ANTHONY TRYTHALL. Cassell, £6.95.

[5] *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought*. By BRIAN BOND. Cassell, £7.95.

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of this kind. He has discharged his task with affection, charity and tact, and yet with shrewd discernment and unflinching honesty. Dr Bond sees Liddell Hart as a highly civilised man, a rationalist, who was, like so many of his class and generation, profoundly affected by the Great War (he himself was gassed on the Western Front).

In Dr Bond's view it was this revulsion from the human and material cost of mass industrialised warfare which inspired Liddell Hart's advocacy in the 1920s of a small highly-professional and all-mechanised army that would win a future war quickly and almost bloodlessly by a strategy of "the Indirect Approach." It likewise inspired his powerful urging in the late 1930s that Britain create an army not for another Western Front alongside the French but only for anti-aircraft defence at home and a subsidiary campaign outside Europe. Dr Bond penetratingly notes, moreover, that in his writings Liddell Hart reduced war to a bloodless game of skill; an intellectual abstraction. Yet in this revulsion from the experience of mass conflict in the Great War Liddell Hart was only typical of the British governing élite as a whole during the inter-war period. Here lies the clue to his astonishing influence at the time—he provided expert justification for that élite's profound escapist urges in the face of Nazi Germany.

It is hard not to agree with Dr Bond that Liddell Hart was not really a historian in the true sense, but used historical subjects to support his own military theories. Yet it is his *History of the Second World War* which demonstrates the limitations of his conception of war, showing that despite all the futurism of his pre-war schemes for armoured forces he was really a traditional military thinker who envisaged war solely in terms of military operations, and who failed to take in the overriding political, social and technological factors. Similarly his biography of Sherman shows little awareness that the American Civil War was a struggle to the death between two entire societies. Indeed, as Dr Bond justly remarks, Liddell Hart's outlook was pre-Clausewitzian—positively 18th-century in his ideal of a limited, rational and relatively bloodless contest between small bodies of professionals. Thus, by a paradox, Britain's most famous modern writer on war turns out to have been himself a product of that liberal enlightenment which could not bring itself to come to terms with the gruesome consequences of a conjuncture between mass society, mass passions and the resources of industrialised states.

YET DESPITE THEIR FLAWS Liddell Hart and Fuller were big-minded men, bold of ideas, addressing themselves to educated public opinion at large—Schlieffens of military history. *Technical Change and British Naval Policy 1860–1939*, a collection of seven essays edited by Professor Bryan Ranft,[6] exemplifies the contrasting virtues of the modern professional scholar, painstakingly working through a mass of original documents and presenting the results to his fellow professionals in the studiedly colourless language of the bureaucrat. Professor Ranft and his colleagues have provided an extremely interesting and valuable dossier on a hitherto somewhat neglected aspect of strategic history—the influence of technological innovation and manufacturing capability on the evolution of an armed force and its doctrine.

From these essays, which cover such topics as the adoption of the Whitehead torpedo and the battleship-versus-aircraft controversy, there emerges the broad lesson that the key to successful military innovation lies in the timing: not too soon, but when technical improvement has turned a novelty of high potential into an effective and reliable piece of kit, and just before your rivals adopt it themselves. The defect of this kind of historiography is, however, that too much emphasis lies on the documentation as such and not enough on the living personalities behind it; we are given therefore less a re-creation than an autopsy of the past. It is a pity that the talents of the documentary researcher cannot be more often joined to the kind of literary skill and insight displayed by C. Northcote Parkinson in his *Britannia Rules*,[7] which, though only re-telling the well-known story of the Nelson era from familiar source material, does succeed in making us realise that admirals wrote despatches not merely in order to furnish the historian with evidence, but in order to bring about the defeat of dangerous enemies.

WHEN IN THE 1950s AND 1960s the neglect of the study of war in Anglo-Saxon universities was at last repaired, the beneficiaries were, however, largely newcomers to the field such as conflict analysts, games theorists, economists, the theologians of nuclear war and deterrence. For these newcomers history prior to the dropping of the atom bomb in 1945 was virtually without relevance; case study less important than

[6] *Technical Change and British Naval Policy 1860–1939*. Edited by BRYAN RANFT. Hodder & Stoughton, £8.50.

[7] *Britannia Rules: The Classic Age of Naval History*. By C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £5.95.

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the devising of theoretical "models." Under Secretary McNamara these "experts" reached the apogee of their influence in America, after which, as Brian Bond points out, the course of the Viet Nam war somewhat dimmed their credit.

Prominent among these newcomers to war studies have been the sociologists. Thanks greatly to Professor Morris Janowitz of the University of Chicago, whose 1960 work *The Professional Soldier* enjoyed wide influence, a new discipline of "military sociology" has come into being. The thrust of Janowitz's analysis was antipathetic towards the traditional military type (characterised by him as the "heroic leader") and ethos; he saw the officer as coming more and more to resemble the civilian manager in style of life, way of regarding his job; even costume. The American army which later lost the Viet Nam War certainly approximated more closely to a civilian industrial organisation, not least in outlook, than any previous army the world has seen. Perhaps it would have done better to have widened rather than narrowed the distinctions between itself and General Motors; heightened military punctilio and ceremony, and stiffened the formal bonds of discipline.

The US Army—and Professor Janowitz's regiment of military sociologists—could well profit from reading Eric and Andro Linklater's *The Black Watch*,[8] a new history of that remarkable military tribe. Eric Linklater describes how, as he and fellow survivors of The Watch coming out of the line on the Somme in 1918 passed the fragment of a Guards battalion, the piper began to play "Highland Laddie": "We were a tatterdemalion crew from the coal-mines of Fife and the back-streets of Dundee, but we trod quick-stepping to the brawling tune, kilts swinging to answer the swagger of the Guards. . . ." Here in a sentence is what McNamara's army in Viet Nam, for all its technology and its industrial-style "managers", so fatally lacked.

Nevertheless the military sociologists have begun to turn from methodology to case-study—in other words, history. In *The Army in Victorian Society*[9] Dr Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, a British colleague of Janowitz, attempts to offer a sociological explanation for the army's defeats at Boer hands during "Black Week" in 1899. He has amassed much evidence on the social origins of officers, military intermarriages, officers' aristocratic and parliamentary connections, the purchase of commissions, army reform and the opposition to it. What might have emerged from all this industry is a useful reference work on the Victorian army in its social and political setting; the equivalent, say, of J. R. Western's *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century*.

Unfortunately Dr Harries-Jenkins is not an experienced historian but a Janowitzian sociologist making a covert case against the Victorian officer for being a country gentleman loyal to traditional military custom and trappings. It is appropriate, though not Dr Harries-Jenkins' fault, that the picture on the jacket, purporting to be of the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, should be in fact that of the entirely successful charge of the no less aristocratic Heavy Brigade earlier in the day. The author himself admits towards the end of his book that up to the 1890s "it can be argued that the army was able to meet the commitments with which it was tasked with almost complete success. . . ." With regret it must be said that his attempt to apply a sociologist's assumptions to a mass of unfamiliar material has led him into much confusion and contradiction.

BUT AT LEAST the sociologist aspires to objectivity. The same cannot be said of the committed journalist, like Harry Hopkins, the author of *The Strange Death of Private White*.[10] White, a 7th Hussar, received 150 lashes in 1846 for striking an NCO and succumbed a few weeks later of a fever. Did his death really result from the flogging? The army medical officers thought not; the Coroner and the medical consultant who examined the exhumed body thought yes. The prolonged proceedings in the Coroner's Court evoked a national controversy between those who believed that without flogging the army's discipline would collapse and those who regarded flogging as a barbarous torture meriting abolition forthwith.

The case of Private White is a fascinating one, demonstrating how military matters can illuminate wide social and political issues. For it gave occasion for a clash between surviving Georgian callousness and up-and-coming Victorian humanitarianism; provided an opportunity for radical politicians of the rising urban middle class to hammer at a vulnerable point in the existing ruling order (the landed interest). It raises the question of how, and when, something previously acceptable to general public opinion—like military flogging, like bad drains, like public hanging—ceases to be so, and the part played in this process by adventitious scandals like the death of Private White. Unfortunately Harry Hopkins' purpose is not so much to explore such topics as to milk our indignation and our class

[8] *The Black Watch*. By ERIC AND ANDRO LINKLATER. Barrie & Jenkins, £8.95.

[9] *The Army in Victorian Society*. By GWYN HARRIES-JENKINS. Routledge, £5.50.

[10] *The Strange Death of Private White: A Victorian Scandal That Made History*. By HARRY HOPKINS. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £5.95.

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PAST AND PRESENT

a journal of historical studies

Past and Present began publication in 1952. It now appears in February, May, August and November. It publishes a wide variety of scholarly and original historical articles primarily concerned with social, economic and cultural changes, and their causes and consequences. The Journal is designed to reach an audience that includes both specialists and non-specialists; to communicate the results of historical research in readable and lively form; to provide a forum for debate in which historians and scholars in allied subjects take part and to encourage the examination of particular problems and periods for the light they throw on wider issues of historical change.

Past and Present has a very well-established reputation. The French journal *Annales* has referred to it as "la plus grande revue d'histoire du monde anglophone." A review in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* stated that "No historical periodical has done more than *Past and Present* to influence the study and teaching of history in British universities. . . . It has proved extremely fertile in new interpretations, ideas and controversies. . . . What makes *Past and Present* so invigorating is that it encourages historians to extend their horizons and ask new questions."

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prejudice. He writes graphically in the manner of an exposure article in a quality Sunday newspaper, blatantly colouring up the heroes and the villains, cunningly dropping in such damning pieces of evidence as that the Colonel of the Regiment had been brought up in a pleasant country house. Flogs his subject to death, as one might say.

Remnants of History

The Ancient Near East & Greece—By JOHN BOARDMAN

THE SUSTAINED INTEREST of the reading and viewing public in the remote past is probably not so much another and extreme aspect of universal nostalgia as of those other obsessions with anthropology and with the study of the behaviour of man as just another animal, the naked ape. In some ways it is not altogether wholesome, perhaps a sign of final disillusionment with the divinity of man. Even much of the archaeologist's work is presented as though to discredit pious beliefs in man's inexorable progress rather than to entertain and encourage him by examples of past achievement, and a recent book from the States was devoted to man's abuse of the environment in antiquity. But at least the purveyors of antiquity—publishers, scholars, presenters in word and image—are happy and busy.

Current preoccupations with man's effect on the natural environment, and with the ill effects on man himself of his desire to live in cities, may in part account for books on the early near east which dwell on these matters. A turning point was the transition from man as hunter and gatherer to man as a settled agriculturalist—a change in manners and methods comparable with the differences between those of, say, a cocktail party and tea at the vicarage. A result, hastened by craft specialisation, population growth and improved methods of transport, was city life.

This sounds exciting stuff, a glimpse of man planning his own Fall, answering the constraints imposed by Mother Earth and his own gene-impulse for survival, but to do it all justice calls for the poetic imagination of a William Golding, and poetic imagination comes nowhere in the range of skills deployed by the modern writer on the past. Acquaintance with the jargons of the statistician, natural scientist, psychologist—yes; a true sympathy with a subject which should deal with humanity as something more than a machine predetermined by environment—generally, no. The raw material, of course, does not help. There is not much of it, and what there is we see time and again, barely rearranged to suit minor variations on the latest theory. That Jericho skull again; Israeli soldier-archaeologists on their neat knee-level sites; miracles of reconstructed brick on Mesopotamian palaces and temples. At least the wonders of Mellaart's remarkable discoveries in southern Turkey at Catal Hüyük and Hacilar never seem to pall, partly for their evocative quality, partly because they have been more adequately published than most post-war discoveries—but I shall return to this.

THE STORY IS PRESENTED to us at many different levels. Magnus Magnusson's winning ways with the ancient and inanimate are well known to viewers. They translate on to paper only a little less successfully. However much we parade our literacy we will always be engaged more successfully by an image than by a text. His *B.C.*: *The Archaeology of the Bible Lands* is the book of the TV film series.[1] If the Bible is history and archaeology is history they should have some points in common. Much of the excavating in the near east in the last century was done Bible in hand, but the modern excavator who takes this line may not easily win the assent of his fellows. The confident identifications and dates of the last century, and even of the '30s, are quietly being undermined, and the Bible is proving as good and bad a guide in the field as Homer has been in the Aegean world.

[1] *B.C.*: *The Archaeology of the Bible Lands*. By MAGNUS MAGNUSSON. Bodley Head/BBC, £6.50.

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Johns Hopkins

THE ANATOMY OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

Maurice Mandelbaum

This major work by a leading philosopher provides an overview of the structure of historical writing. Maurice Mandelbaum seeks "to clarify some problems which are of concern to philosophers and historians who reflect on the nature of history as a discipline, on what constitutes explanation in history, and whether historical knowledge is as reliable as other forms of knowledge may be."
The work is divided into three parts. The first provides an analytic account of different types of historical inquiry, discussing what they have in common and wherein they differ. The second treats at length the nature of causal explanation in everyday life and in science, and considers the relation between causes and laws. This account is then related to the nature of historical explanation. The final section analyses the concept of objectivity and estimates the extent to which the inquiries of historians can be said to be objective, and the limits of that objectivity in some types of historical accounts.

256 pages, £10.50

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON MATERIAL CIVILIZATION AND CAPITALISM

Fernand Braudel

translated by Patricia M. Ranum

Fernand Braudel, one of France's foremost historians, is preeminently the historian of material civilization. The *Afterthoughts* presents his mature reflections on his major published and projected works. The material dimension, Braudel affirms, is quintessential to human life. Material goods—cereals, spices, silk, gold, sugar, tobacco—have determined the rise and fall of empires as much as kings or princes have done. In the author's world view, capitalism represents, not a coherent ideological system, but a sum total of various expedients, procedures, habits, and performances that have accreted over time.
In all market economies Braudel distinguishes two levels of exchange: a lower one comprising markets, shops, and peddlers, and an upper one comprising fairs, bourses, and other institutions of credit. It was the development of this upper level of credit, he believes, that enabled European merchant economies to assume a dominant role from the 15th to the 18th century. Notwithstanding the dominance of particular nations in particular eras, Braudel views the world as one economic system in which the economic activities of Europe, Asia, and Africa are fused together.

144 pages, £5.95

THE FIRST DUCE

D'Annunzio at Fiume

Michael A. Ledeen

A poet in the Byronic style and popular hero of the First World War, Gabriele D'Annunzio was one of the most flamboyant figures in the history of modern Italy. His capture in 1919 of the city of Fiume, claimed by Italy as part of the peace settlement, has been popularised and romanticised. Using new information gathered in Italian archives and personal interviews, Michael A. Ledeen examines the sixteen months of D'Annunzio's personal rule in Fiume.
D'Annunzio has often been described as the "John the Baptist" of Italian Fascism, for virtually the entire ritual of Fascist politics made familiar by Mussolini—the balcony address, the Roman salute, the dramatic dialogues with the crowd—were taken over from the "free state of Fiume." Yet there were, as Ledeen brings sharply into focus, profound differences between D'Annunzio's vision of a new world and that offered by Fascism.
Fiume, during the months of D'Annunzio's rule, was celebrated as the City of Holocaust. It exhibited many of the phenomena of our own time: sexual promiscuity, experimentation with drugs, clergymen wanting to marry, women demanding equal rights, youth calling for the elimination of old and corrupt leaders, and minorities clamouring for their fair share of political power. From the dispassionate distance of half a century, Ledeen presents D'Annunzian Fiume as a microcosm of the larger chaos of our modern world.

288 pages, £9.50

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Magnusson's account is honest and easy to read. Perhaps it tried to home on too many targets at once. The popular touch is there, lively without being familiar or patronising. Authority is lent by his Dante, Professor Pritchard, and his readiness to consult and quote a good selection of other scholars—here the TV technique shows through, and quoting others is never quite as satisfying as trying to understand and interpret them. The Biblical pictures from the arts of the Middle Ages and later are fun but a mistake, as they were on the screen. They translate the whole narrative to a storyland and render it even more difficult for readers to get under the skin of the people he is writing about—to feel the problems of life in the desert, the challenge of a new land and hostile cities (no maps, plenty of Intelligence), to reconcile the story with recognisable places and figures identifiable in other sources.

Perhaps this is the whole problem of writing archaeological history. The sites as they are today seem indistinguishable; the artefacts functional, rarely even pretty; the texts and Bible pictures overcast with the shadows of live religions. Science lends a spurious air of accuracy (though at least it can also take us more directly to the real ancient world of weather, food, crops) or is misused to mechanise the lacunose evidence into a semblance of determinism. The new Prophets and interpreters of the ways of God to men are the model-builders of archaeology.

Magnusson's quality is the more apparent by comparison with a book on the Hittites by a German quasi-counterpart and TV writer,[2] which is joky, episodic, and unforgivably original in declaring Catal Hüyük a City of the Dead, like Wunderlich's Knossos.

AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL AGAIN Phaidon are embracing barbarian antiquity as enthusiastically as in the past they have served Classical antiquity and the art history of later centuries. Ruth Whitehouse's *The First Cities* is endearing for the way its first photograph is of a timeless Iraqi walled village, its last Manhattan Island.[3] Between comes a clear non-controversial account of the early sites with a fair attempt to define what a city is and how little connection there need have been between parallel developments in the near east, Egypt and India. The dust raised a few years ago by the anti-diffusionists, whose desire to see independent though similar responses to similar challenges bid to render obsolete theories of the movement of peoples and ideas, has by now settled and a cooler look at the evidence becomes possible though the chronological issues which might have appeared solved by science are due for another stir in the melting pot.

Mrs Whitehouse may have been helped in her book by a degree of professional detachment or at least not too deep commitment to the periods and places studied. The Phaidon books on the near east and Egypt are different in approach and more severely didactic. The Egyptian is the better, and probably the easier to write and to read because of the unity of subject.[4] There is something in Egyptian art and architecture which defies boredom despite the repetition, and we seem to know an almost indecent amount about the lives and practices of all classes of ancient Egyptian society. Egyptian was the first of the archaeologies to be taken up by the modern world, apart from the overfamiliar Classical, and there is still something rather old-fashioned in the way it is presented and studied—even, I fear, excavated. John Ruffle's book is wisely laid out, with informative lengthy captions on the pictures, to which offset lithography has lent an appropriately sand-blasted appearance.

Charles Burney's *From Village to Empire*[5] is for teachers and students, severe in its clusters of archaeological drawings, but the only book of the last three mentioned which one might be tempted to use also as a work of reference. Its title implies a historical approach which barely shows through the tight but fecund writing. This new fashion for discursive captions to pictures needs careful handling. It can be used as an excuse for omitting references in the text (as in Whitehouse); it ought to relieve the text of data and discussion which might interrupt the narrative but which positively help the understanding of the picture.

SO WE COME TO the Classical Greek world. Classical studies may be on the decline in Britain but the interest in Greek art and archaeology is not. Classicists will learn, probably too late, that this way lies salvation for a study which can be so enriching and challenging for the modern reader, and in which methods of teaching are at last showing signs of joining the 20th century.

The new *Atlas of Classical Archaeology*[6] ought to be a move in the right direction. Its editor, Moses Finley, has been a busy champion of a

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[2] *The Hittites*. By JOHANNES LEHMANN. Collins, £5.75.

[3] *The First Cities*. By RUTH WHITEHOUSE. Phaidon, £6.95, paper £4.95.

[4] *Heritage of the Pharaohs*. By JOHN RUFFLE. Phaidon, £7.95, paper £5.95.

[5] *From Village to Empire*. By CHARLES BURNEY. Phaidon, £7.95, paper £5.95.

[6] *Atlas of Classical Archaeology*. Edited by MOSES FINLEY. Chatto and Windus, £8.50.

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NEW FROM CALIFORNIA

A Short History of the French Revolution, 1789-1799

Albert Soboul.
Translated by Geoffrey Symcox

Albert Soboul has held the Chair of the History of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne since 1967, and is probably the leading Marxist scholar working in that field today. The book translated here should be regarded more as a synopsis of Professor Soboul's interpretation of the Revolution than as a detailed account of the course of events: it is an essay in analysis rather than a narrative. In it the author argues that the French Revolution can only be understood in terms of class struggle, and that any attempt to diminish the significance of class conflict as its motive force obscures the meaning of the events of the Revolution and renders them ultimately incomprehensible. Professor Soboul shows that although the Revolution was caused initially by specific factors peculiar to the structure of French society at the end of the Old Regime, it came to constitute the definitive type of bourgeois revolution, and opened the way for the ascendancy of industrial capitalism in the next century, not merely in France, but in the rest of Europe and the world at large.

200 pages, Cloth £9.00, Paper £2.20

Renaissance Rome

A Portrait of a Society, 1500-1559

Peter Partner

In 1500 Rome was a city of towers and streets so cramped and deformed they were hardly worthy of that name.
Renaissance Rome was "disorderly, unlucky, indeterminate, ruled by men who were not quite sure how to deal with their political and ideological situation." Yet the Renaissance popes accomplished the preliminaries for the great triumph of urban planning which we call "Counter-Reformation" Rome. One of the aims of Mr Partner's lively portrait of Renaissance Rome is to explain how its bishops could have achieved such a feat at the very time the whole order of the Church was being deeply challenged. His wide-ranging survey embraces the physical city, the highlights of its economy, the papal court and cardinals, Roman people of all classes, the varieties of foreigners, the new streets and palaces of the Renaissance, the tastes and morals of the governing clerical elite, and the spiritual life of the city. The volume offers an eminently readable blend of colourful detail and judicious analysis.

240 pages, £10.00

The Age of German Liberation, 1795-1815

Friedrich Meinecke
Edited with Introduction by Peter Paret.
Translated by Peter Paret and Helmut Fischer

The Age of German Liberation, originally published in 1906, is a concise, sophisticated analysis of the Prussian response to the French Revolution by a celebrated German historian. Germany's reaction in the decades from the French Revolution to the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire set the tone for much of the subsequent history of Central Europe. Meinecke's study of this period is a classic example of the integration of intellectual history with political, social, and military analysis.

225 pages, Cloth £9.00, Paper £1.80

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new look for ancient history, with proper attention paid to the social and economic problems which may be barely explored or documented in ancient texts because they were not recognised as problems or significant issues in antiquity. Environmental studies could probably do more for this than excavation, given the inadequacies of the evidence obtainable from most Classical sites. A geographical approach is a sensible one and the scheme here, to pick significant rather than necessarily major sites and present them with commentary, plans and photographs, seems a good one. Unfortunately the results are uneven and Finley has allowed his authors too much freedom. His own section on Sicily and that on Greece (by R. M. Cook) are the best in this respect; some of the Roman ones, verging on the cruise-lecture in style, the poorest. The range is good, as far as Aï Khnum, Alexander's city on the Oxus, but the first photograph, and the only two-page spread, is of Hadrian's Wall and this vogue for the barbarian periphery is surely due for a change of emphasis, preferably back towards the central Mediterranean lands. The plans have been specially redrawn and unsurprisingly lose in accuracy. (Athens' plan is rather a mess with the Eleusinion and Pericles' Odeon badly misplaced.) But schools and the historian who is not prepared to give much thought to this sort of thing unless helped to it will profit from such a book.

IN THE LINE of more conventional Classical history and archaeology Thames and Hudson have for some years now been offering a series on Aspects of Greek and Roman Life edited by Professor Scullard. The three new titles are informative and good to read. It would be a pleasure to add that they too show an awareness of new ways to study old problems but this is far from true and all of them could have been written 50 years ago using virtually the same range of evidence in the same way. (I exaggerate only slightly.)

John Pollard's book on birds in ancient Greece[7] is, of course, appealing. He knows his texts and he knows his birds, so we get a full account of the relevant species, their names, what the Greeks thought of them, what part they played in Greek mythology, magic and cuisine. The wryneck (*iunx*) twists its head from side to side in its courting dance and the Greeks bound it to a wheel which they spun to and fro as a charm. They also made substitute wheels which could serve as love charms and be spun by being strung on to cords through two holes near the centre. The toy is to be found still today and a few years ago you could cut one off the back of a cornflakes packet. This sort of charm, more humane in its rejection of the live bird, is often shown in Greek art in the hands of a woman or Eros. It would have been nice to show the reader one.

The range of the subject is challenging. Works of art show waterbirds in domestic scenes which suggest their domestication in Athens. Greek artists number both those who knew their birds and those who simply drew a bird-shaped bird for any occasion—contrast the eagles of Pollard's figures 22–23 and 25. Objects were often fashioned in the shapes of birds—a bone brooch with a bird carrying its young pick-a-back; bird vases for perfumes; jugs of conventional type with their bodies and necks painted to resemble birds; models in graves and even the presence of bird bones and eggs in graves as offerings. Interesting stuff, and none of it mentioned. It is perhaps a subject that calls for a knowledge of more even than texts and birds.

THE FORMER PROFESSOR of Ancient History and Librarian at Trinity College, Dublin—H. W. Parke—is well known as an authority on Greek oracles and his new book is about Athens' festivals.[8] These he treats month by month rather than deity by deity, which is a good approach for any reader since it makes better sense of the seasonal needs which many festivals answered, and gives some idea of just how crowded a religious calendar the Athenian could enjoy. Not that everything necessarily closed on a feast-day, and some festivals had a significance linked closely to a locality in Athens or to a closely defined section of the community, *e.g.*, women. Their function, of appeasing the gods and reminding them of their responsibilities, had become rather blurred by the Classical period and overlaid with ritual of mis-remembered origin which provided exercise for the priests and mythographers of the day. They also ensured a meat-meal for much of the community since only the inedible parts of the sacrificial animals were offered to the gods. It is all rather formal or at least carefully scripted but there were clearly some lively moments, especially in the festivals of the wine god Dionysos and in some conducted by and for women. I have often wondered what the Acropolis would have been like during a sacrifice of a hundred head of cattle—streams of blood, the offal, smoke, stench, flies. My own brief visit to a very antiseptic abattoir at Aldershot was bad enough; a Classical sacrifice must have called for a very strong stomach.

[7] *Birds in Greek Life and Myth*. By JOHN POLLARD. Thames and Hudson, £8.50.

[8] *Festivals of the Athenians*. By H. W. PARKE. Thames and Hudson, £9.50.

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LAFAYETTE IN THE AGE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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We get the impression that the Greeks were not obsessed by their festivals but enjoyed them, and Aristophanes shows how lightly some, not all, of them could be treated by a sceptic or satirist well this side of being a radical in such matters. The festivals were public, except for some restrictions by sex or race, and tell us nothing about private religion or magic. They were regulated by law and it is these laws, together with the many allusions to them in ancient authors, that are our main source of evidence for them. The text evidence has been gone over by others often enough and Parke rehearses it neatly again. It gives an illusion of tidiness but most of the sources are very late and Greek religion and religious practices were always changing in the interests of political expediency or at the instance, again often political, of foreign customs or distant oracles. For the Classical period they need the control of contemporary evidence—location of shrines, the content and tone of dedicatory inscriptions, scenes of sacrifice and the impedimenta. It is worrying that what appear from the text sources to be important festivals seem to leave little contemporary record, while some Classical shrines and repeated representations of cult acts (presumably therefore popular and important) are with difficulty related to the texts. Here again it may be time to stand back and judge the relative values of the evidence offered and look to other possible sources which may be treated as prime and not merely illustrative.

Aristocracy in Greek Society by M. T. W. Arnheim[9] is even more wholly text-dominated, even where he attempts to define the role of aristocracy in the Greek Bronze Age, and more weight is put on the possible interpretation of words in and structures implied by the Linear B tablets, and even by Homer, than on the physical world and the evidence it offers for its social organisation. For the Classical period Arnheim shows how aristocracy-dominated the semi-democracies of Greece were. This is not particularly controversial, except in emphasis here and there. It is more a re-interpretation of the partially knowable through ancient texts only, and since the study confines itself, naturally enough, to consideration of the ruling classes who got written about, this is not surprising. But surely there must be a new approach even to such a conventional subject.

Four years ago a similar essay had the opportunity to mention three new major monographs on Greek archaeology, and two definitive publications of excavations. This year the nearest we come is Professor A. M. Snodgrass' exciting

[9] *Aristocracy in Greek Society*. By M. T. W. ARNHEIM. Thames and Hudson, £7.00.

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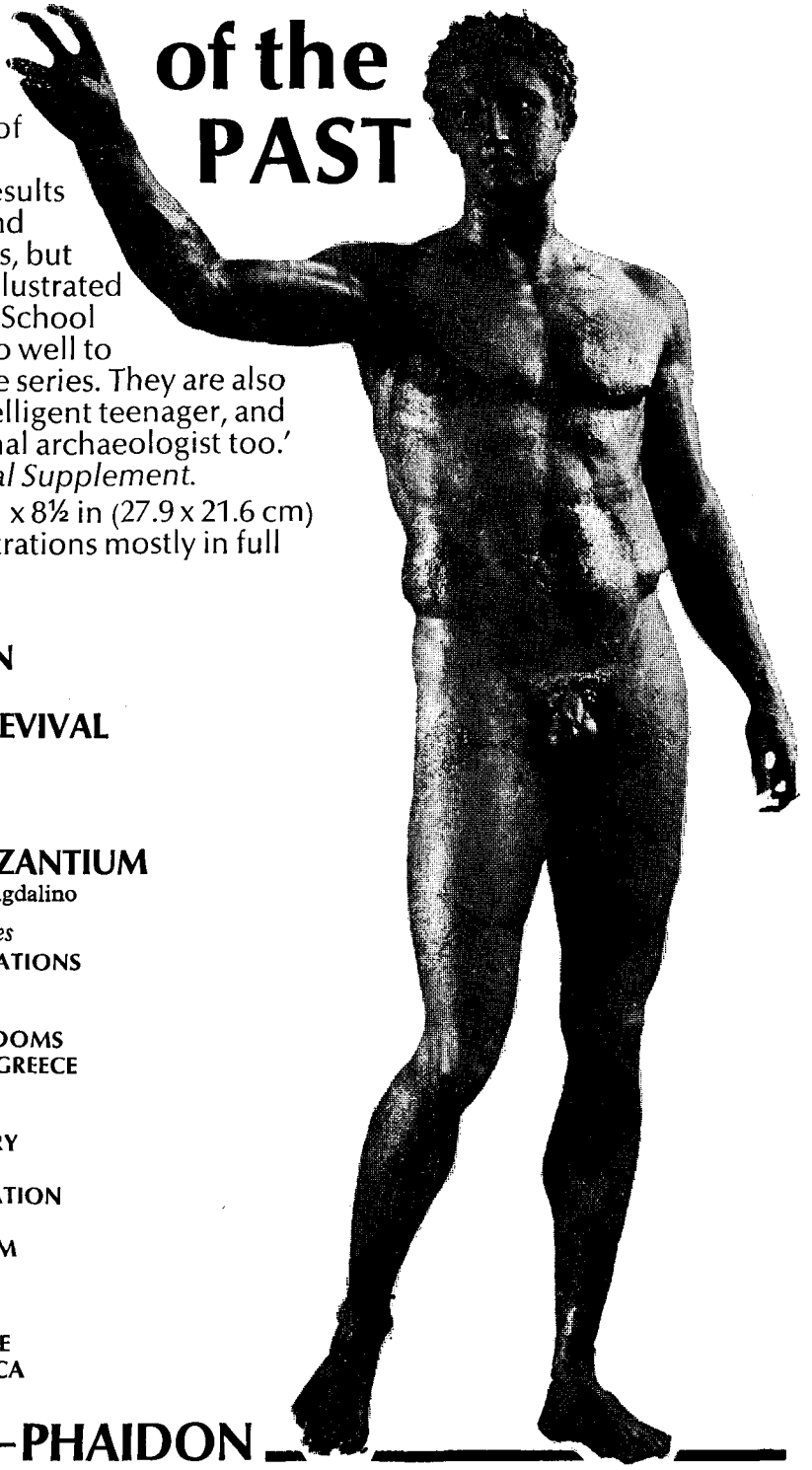
The MAKING of the PAST



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inaugural lecture at Cambridge,[10] which is as near convincing as any inaugural need be. It shows the sort of approach to post-Bronze Age Greek problems, political, social or economic, which should be the concern of our Classical historians today. Where are the monographs now, though, and the dig publications? Two major works on Greek architecture by J. Coulton in the last year are the closest we get.

AS FOR FINAL PUBLICATION of excavations, precious few of the sites I have mentioned in Greece or the near east have been so honoured and I would be surprised if the situation will have much improved for them in four years' time. This spotlights an academic disease which can hardly be blamed on the costs of publication though it may to some degree reflect on what are regarded as minimal but extravagant standards of publication. Too many major sites have been and are being excavated. They generate preliminary reports, if we are lucky, or a semi-popular *Excavating Tell Meanother*: they feed the books of the type reviewed here, but the debt to man's past which they have pillaged remains unpaid. Rhys Carpenter put it neatly 50 years ago—describing the archaeologists' "realisation that they are burning the book of history page by page as they read it."

Perhaps in another four years a new crime against both the environment and man will be recognised, and the destruction of antiquity in the cause of scholarship be held in as high disrepute as the destruction of antiquity in the cause of commerce.

[10] *Archaeology and the Rise of the Greek State*. By A. M. SNODGRASS. Cambridge University Press, 70p.

A Version of the Past

On Américo Castro—By RAYMOND CARR

NOT LONG BEFORE HE DIED I talked with Jaime Vicens Vives, the founding father of the Catalan school of historians, about the work of Américo Castro. "It's magnificent", he said "but it's not history." Castro was not a historian in the conventional mould. He was, to use a Latin American phrase, a *pensador*, a thinker of great thoughts, brooding on one single exercise: the dissection of "Spanishness", the essential quality that distinguishes Spaniards "in" their history, as he would put it. This retrospective search for an identity, common to nations conscious of decline, was an obsession to many Spanish thinkers of his generation. It came out of shattering defeat when, in 1898, the Spanish Fleet was blown out of the water by the US Navy and the last remnant of the greatest colonial empire the world had seen was lost at the very moment when other European powers were building theirs. What historical experiences led Spain to be a monstrous invalid of history, unfit to join the modern world?

The answers Castro gave have inspired or irritated those who have studied his vast output. The adulation of some of the contributors to this book[1] has to be matched by the fury of the attack on him by his peer in erudition, Sánchez Albórnoz, an attack of a violence unparalleled in the annals of professional historiography.

How did a liberal-minded but conventional scholar who started out in 1910 as a member of the school of philologists and literary historians collected around Menéndez Pidal's Centre of Historical Studies come to hold views that many of his colleagues were to regard as profoundly heterodox, to invent a historical vision and a language to explain it that were peculiar to him and his disciples?

Castro, in his original function as a literary historian and critic, came to ask one question whether he was studying the *comedia* of the Golden Age, *Don Quixote*, or the arid wastes of 18th-century poetry. Why did a writer write as he did? To find an answer Castro became a self-made historian. Whereas the erudite tradition looked for "influences" (what had Cervantes read?) Castro looked at the assumptions and conflicts of the society which must be reflected in every aspect of art. "A poetic style", Ortega wrote, "carries within it a philosophy and a morality, a science and a politics." So it did with Castro. He sought to find his author's existential situation—here he was influenced by Unamuno—what in his terminology (and like so many *pensadores* he christened his brain-children with odd names) he called "the vital dwelling place."

To find this "vital dwelling place" he was led to

[1] *Américo Castro and the Meaning of Spanish Civilization*. Edited by JOSÉ RUBIA BARCIA. University of California Press, $15.00, £10.90.

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dismantle the structure of Spanish history as his predecessors had seen it and most of his contemporaries continued to see it; or as he put it "rectifying the history of Spain as it is now accepted." One of the notions he attacked went deservedly into the dustbin of history: that there was a Spanish character fixed by remote geographical and biological influences detectable in Trajan, Martial and Seneca—all born in Spain; a character unalterable over time passing from the cave paintings of Altamira and the epics of Saguntum and Numantia to the pictures of Picasso and the "heroic" siege of the Alcazar in 1936.

Secondly he dismantled the notion that the Moorish invasion and occupation of Spain and the Jewish influence in medieval Spain were national and cultural disasters. The completion of Reconquest by the Christian kingdoms of the north—seen by nationalist historians as the great national epic—ended, for Castro, a splendid symbiosis of the superior Arab and Jewish culture with the crude Spanish Christian civilisation in northern Spain. With the completion of the conquest by Ferdinand and Isabella Spain became "Tibetanised", intolerant and inward-looking, with the now dominant Christian caste seeking to eliminate, by expulsion, all traces of Arab and Jewish heritage. But expelled physically and from the surface of life the old essences—particularly the Jewish heritage—worked away, hidden in Spanish society. The *conversos*—converted Jews or New Christians—remained an alienated marginal caste in the Spain of the Golden Age. That Age's obsession with "purity of blood" was an invention to stamp out the taint of Jewish blood. Hence that age was not an age of harmony but of hidden conflict, dominated by the great fear of crypto-Judaism.

CASTRO NOW HAD the tool he needed: a Spanish character moulded by an historical experience, which was totally different from that of any other Western nation. This led him, very unfortunately and to the impoverishment of his work, to reject any attempt to explain Spain by using the historical methods common to Western European historians, just as the unique structure of Spain itself doomed to failure any attempt to import elements of "European" culture. They could only be, as he argues of the 18th-century enlightenment or 19th-century liberalism and capitalism, rejected by this unique resistant historical mould.

Once Castro came to believe that he had found the answer to the question "Why is Spain different?" he applied it ruthlessly to every aspect of Spanish life, above all to the productions of its creative writers, convinced that he had found *the* key to history. As José Luis Aranguren

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stresses, his methods were literary and slipshod. "Don Américo found verification wherever he looked . . . it is easy to make history, a malleable substance, respond according to what is asked of it." He now could explain the rejection of materialism that lay behind the great literary creations of the Golden Age and the incapacity of Spaniards to modernise and industrialise, to produce a comfortable chair. A mild man, he preached his message with the zeal of a convert and, at times, with the presumption of a prophet whose mission was to make a whole nation aware of its past as *he* saw it.

Castro's development and methods are illustrated in these essays. Antony van Beysterveldt shows how Castro originally thought that the bitter ambiguities in *Don Quixote* concealed Cervantes' efforts to harmonise his enthusiasm for Renaissance ideas with his respect for Catholic tradition. His dilemma is that of *every* European of his age. Later he finds the hidden secret of *Don Quixote* in the peculiarities of the Spanish vital dwelling place in the 16th century. Cervantes' bitterness comes from the fact that he is a *converso* and, as such, ostracised and condemned to wander around as a tax collector in Andalusia while Lope de Vega's plays were triumphing in Madrid. Well yes. But suppose Cervantes' failures in the world were the failures of a crossgrained man. And one can be a crossgrained man without Jewish ancestry. In any case the evidence of Cervantes' Jewish blood is tenuous. When our most distinguished Hispanist pointed this out to Castro he replied "I can smell them."

Castro seems on sounder ground when he talks of the drama of the Golden Age—a drama written by the priests, Lope, Tirso de Molina and Calderón. He sees the concern with the code of honour, the implacable vengeance meted out to conjugal infidelity, as a surface reflection of the real issue of this age of conflict—the obsession with "purity of blood" seen as a device to keep converted Jews on the margin of society. For Castro "purity of blood" has nothing to do with aristocratic lineage—too many aristocrats had married rich Jews for that and only peasants were "pure"; it was religious and racial, and the anti-Semitism which erupted in the pogroms of the later middle ages was a *popular* phenomenon. Carroll Johnson, in his essay, makes the mechanism of displacement in the drama clear on Freudian lines—a step Castro could not take. Intercaste conflict could not be displaced on to something trivial—wearing long or short hair for example—but on a subject of sufficient power to turn psychic energy from its real to a substitute object. Conjugal honour filled the bill—contamination of the marriage had had a semantic analogy with contamination of blood. Seventeenth-century Spaniards were not *really* a nation of seducers and psychopathic wife-murderers; the "reality" reflected in the drama of the Golden Age was the reality of caste conflict. When one of Lope's characters expatiates on the nobility of bacon everyone in the audience would know that the speaker could not be a secret Jew. Much of this is revealing: but, as José Antonio Maravall pointed out, "purity of blood" in the sense of concern with lineage and honour was not unique to 17th-century Spain.

CASTRO'S WHOLE INTERPRETATION depends on his vision of the "tolerant" harmonious society in which the Muslim Arab, Jew and Christian Spanish castes could co-exist (even when Arabs and Christians were fighting each other) and the subsequent relapse of this society into caste hostility and intolerance. Whereas nationalist historians had written off the Arab contribution Castro, like García Lorca to his cost, gloried in it. Whereas Sánchez Albornoz held that the Arab invasion inhibited development along Western lines, Castro believes that it was contact and conflict with the Arab world that "made" Spaniards a unique nation. James Monroe's essay on the Hispanic-Arabic world is outstanding and mildly critical: the collapse of tolerance comes in the 11th century as religion comes to be the unifying factor on both sides and the Reconquest a crusade. Castro was certainly correct in considering the complete Spanish identification of state and church, of religion and nationalism, as a consequence of a religious war. (Is it, one might ask, "unique" as Castro thought—what about Catholicism and Polish nationalism?) The Muslim warriors had their prophet and their place of pilgrimage, Mecca; the Christians irritated them by inventing their own "prophet"—St James—and their own holy place—Compostella. "The Spanish Empire", Professor Monroe argues, "would not have been possible as we know it had not the Spanish people learned how to be religious imperialists from their Muslim enemies."

Castro was as enthusiastic a convert to the Jewish contribution as he was to the Arab. Here again standard nationalist history came under attack. "The Jews", writes Julio Rodríguez-Puertolas, "normally appear in the standard histories of Spain on only two occasions: in connection with King Alfonso the Learned and his school of translators in Toledo, and in connection with their expulsion from Spain in 1492." Then, suddenly this unmentioned race becomes a danger to the whole society and is expelled. After that "purity of blood" becomes an obsession and intellectual endeavour as such

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for ever condemned by an intransigent Catholic society, because it smacks of Zion.

To Américo Castro it is one of the tragic ironies of medieval Spain that Moors and Jews, in some sense, brought on themselves their own destruction. It was the Moors who invented the Holy War, making religion the test of civil society. "In Spain", General Franco said, "you are a Catholic or you are nothing." While the Jews were the great intermediaries between Islamic and Christian culture, it was they who set such great store by racial purity, by untainted descent. By a process of dreadful mimicry "the exclusiveness of Catholic Spain was a reply to the hermeticism of Jewish communities." Yet one must ask: Who made the ghettos? Who restricted Jews to occupations—tax-collecting and usury—in which they must earn the hatred of the poor who burned their ghettos?

It is likewise one of the tragic ironies in the bitter polemics of Castro and Sánchez Albórnoz that both were convinced Republicans. Of the two versions Castro's multi-racial vision was the least acceptable to the Castilian imperialists of the Franco régime. Now, I think, very few of the new generation of historians writing in Spain would accept Castro's unique explanation of the structure of Spanish history.

FIRSTLY, CASTRO'S stress on the singularity of Spanish culture that sometimes verges on cultural chauvinism seemed, in Professor Herr's phrase, "to exclude his country for ever from contemporary Western life." Having rejected the notion of a Spanish character as an unchanging entity in a geographical space, he re-invented a monolithic entity created by history. Hence his curious notion of "unliving history"; if Spain failed to absorb the Enlightenment, to industrialise, to adopt Western patterns it was because it could not deny its historical reality.

Secondly he never ceased to be a humanist—and that was his moral strength—using primarily literary sources. His contempt for pure erudition is well founded; his rejection of history as a social science less fortunate. No doubt Castro is correct in arguing that the attitudes of Catholic Spain were not conducive to "material aims" and an industrial take-off; but this is not the whole story. The proud austerity of the Spanish character has passed rapidly away in the new affluence of Francoist Spain; far from echoing Unamuno's cry "Let them [*i.e.* other nations] invent", the Spanish socialists insist that Spain must invent and cease to import technology at the expense of its balance of payments. Spaniards want to become Europeans and leave their vital dwelling place. They want (and have) computerised bank statements and democratic governments; their historians want to analyse Spain's problems (in the plural) as their French masters have analysed European societies, not brood on the one, all-embracing problem of being a Spaniard. The age of thinkers is passing; the age of quantifiers is upon us. The Spaniards may not be producing the finest drama of Europe; but they have learnt to make comfortable chairs.

Waking the Dead

Approaches to Archaeology—By BARRY CUNLIFFE

THE BOOM IN archaeological publishing which began in the early 1960s continues unabated. Books of all kinds—academic, readable, and frankly lunatic—continue to flood the market, and book clubs devoted to the discipline have sprung up advertising their wares in full-page spreads in colour magazines, while the British public is presumably acquiring (if not reading) these works in sufficiently large numbers to enable publishers to keep their prices down to the quite modest levels reflected by many of the books considered here. What would Horace Walpole, who considered antiquarianism to be a "backward looking curiosity", have made of it all?—an unhealthy ostrich-like reaction against the pace of modern life? or perhaps an expression of a deep-centred human need for the community to understand its roots? It is difficult even for an archaeologist to explain fully the attractions of his subject. It is partly the excitement of having to deal with fragments of raw evidence, culling them by increasingly refined techniques, arranging them in a coherent structure and then designing ways of filling the gaps. Piecing together a prehistoric settlement plan or an economic system, or attempting to reconstruct the mechanism by which an ancient society worked, is both an entertaining and, properly conducted, an intellectually invigorating pursuit. The reader of archaeological books is able to observe these processes and to let his own creative imagination loose.

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Inevitably the subject has attracted a lunatic fringe (people whom Patrick Moore calls "free-thinkers")—a market throughly catered for by the more unscrupulous publishers and, recently, by one or two otherwise reputable publishing houses. The appearance of this pseudo-archaeology is a sad but not unamusing insight into human gullibility—it is an area in which hard facts are subservient to vivid imagination. Since such works are more properly regarded as fiction we can conveniently ignore them, having warned the reader to be wary.

THREE RECENT BOOKS demonstrate, in their very different ways, the varied approaches and techniques of the professional archaeologist. Philip Barker's *Techniques of Archaeological Excavation*[1] is without doubt one of the most significant books ever to be written on the subject. It brings out more clearly than any other work that excavation, the most valuable and destructive of all archaeological techniques, is not something that can be learnt by numbers from a manual, any more than one could learn brain surgery from a do-it-yourself magazine—it requires a highly specialised range of skills, an active self-questioning mind and a willingness to subject oneself to long periods of agonising decision-making. Lest I make Barker's book sound off-putting, let me hasten to add that it is beautifully written with a charm and humility typical of its author and is packed with good sense enlivened by brilliant insights. I can think of no better work to introduce a reader to the subtleties and spirit of modern archaeology.

One effect which *Techniques* will have, I suspect, is to discourage amateur groups from indulging in excavation-for-fun (as opposed to rescue work in advance of such threats as road-building and redevelopment). The demise of free enterprise excavation, welcomed by some, bewailed by others, could have the very positive effect of channelling local energy and enthusiasm into another branch of the discipline, less destructive than excavation, that of field-walking and surveying—essentially the discovery and documentation of ancient landscapes. Since the beginning of the century the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments has been publishing Inventories, compiled by teams of professional fieldworkers, on a county for county basis. The most recent volume, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in North-East Northamptonshire*,[2] is a fine example of the Commission's work, listing

[1] *Techniques of Archaeological Excavation*. By PHILIP BARKER. Batsford, £8.95, paper £4.75.

[2] *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in North-East Northamptonshire*. By THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MONUMENTS. H.M.S.O., £14.50.

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and illustrating over 400 sites in 57 parishes. Inventories of this kind cannot be expected to make light bed-time reading but they do provide the essential background for anyone wishing to explore and enjoy in depth a particular piece of landscape (so long as they can afford the extortionate £14.50 for a mere 133 pages which H.M. Stationery Office demands). The widespread and growing interest in the evolution of the landscape has only recently caught the attention of commercial publishers.

A TOTALLY DIFFERENT approach to archaeology is exemplified by Dr Noel Myres' monumental work *A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pagan Period*.[3] The detailed and meticulous study of artifacts and their evolution has always played an important part in archaeological research. Here the author assembles illustrations of some 4,000 Saxon pots, recovered mainly from cemeteries, describing each vessel in turn and discussing the stylistic groups into which they can be divided. Not, it must be admitted, a volume for the general reader, but certainly a work of brilliant scholarship from which many and far-reaching historical conclusions flow, not least that Roman Britain was very probably settled extensively by Germanic communities long before the formal abandonment of the Province in AD 410 after which the more familiar uncontrolled Germanic immigration—the Saxon invasions—began.

[3] *A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pagan Period.* By J. N. L. MYRES. Cambridge University Press, 2 vols., £60.

[4] *Science and Society in Prehistoric Britain.* By EUAN W. MACKIE. Elek, £12.50.

[5] *Alfred's Kingdom.* By DAVID HINTON. Dent, £5.95.

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EXCAVATION, FIELDWORK AND artifact analysis are the three principal methods by which an archaeologist acquires his basic ingredients. To be made palatable they must then be carefully mixed and attractively presented. Two books, both by professional and practising archaeologists, Euan MacKie's *Science and Society in Prehistoric Britain*[4] and David Hinton's *Alfred's Kingdom: Wessex and the South 800–1500*,[5] provide in their different ways good examples of the successful presentation of new and sometimes quite complex archaeological material.

MacKie's book deals with the difficult and still controversial theme referred to by some as astroarchaeology. For some years Professor Alexander Thom has been making highly accurate plans of megalithic monuments in Britain and France from which he has concluded that the neolithic communities who built them possessed accurate systems of measurement and a sophisticated knowledge of geometry. He has gone on to suggest that many of the stone circles and alignments built at this time possessed an astronomical significance and may have functioned as observatories for solar and perhaps lunar events. The first part of MacKie's book is a balanced and thorough summary of the astronomical theory of Thom and other workers in the same field. It makes fascinating reading while at the same time providing an excellent guide for the student to the confusing mass of technical literature which now exists.

In the second part the author considers the society responsible for constructing the monuments. Briefly stated he believes that an élite class of astronomer-priests existed who lived in style in ceremonial centres in Wessex and on Orkney and can be further distinguished from ordinary mortals in that their diet, pottery and clothing were different. While it is perfectly reasonable to assume the probable existence of skilled men manipulating a body of scientific evidence, the rest of MacKie's thoery, though perfectly plausible, is by no means proven. It is but one of a wide range of hypotheses which can be constructed on the slender data-base at present

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available. So long as the book is regarded as a tentative basis from which to argue, rather than a definitive statement, it will not stand the risk of being misunderstood.

David Hinton's book *Alfred's Kingdom* is much less controversial. It is in essence an up-to-date summary of archaeological research in central Southern Britain in the late Saxon and Medieval period. Alfred appears but briefly—it is the landscape of Wessex that provides the thread of continuity. Hinton writes in the compulsive enthusiastic style of a true teacher; he enjoys his subject and evidently wants others to become as involved as he is. To this end he has provided a very useful annotated bibliography to guide the would-be enthusiast through the mass of supporting literature, much of it tucked away in learned journals. This is a book of considerable value to the student and also to those general readers who might be more interested in the physical remains of the period than in a more conventional historical approach.

FASHIONS IN ARCHAEOLOGY change from time to time. At present the period in vogue is the Migration period which began towards the end of the Roman Era and ended with the consolidation of Europe in the 11th century. It was a period of turbulence and massive folk movement, of violence and often near-anarchy. In the East, Byzantium continued to uphold many of the traditions of the now-dead Roman world while the communities of the West groped their way through a period of cultural decline relieved only by brilliant and vigorous art styles. Of all the barbarian peoples to emerge during this time the Vikings are surely the most fascinating representing as they do all the strengths and weaknesses of man—bravery in facing uncharted seas as far west as Newfoundland, dogged persistence which led them across Asia to trade with the Arab world and a savagery with which as bullying predators they raided the coasts of Britain and Normandy. Two new books are devoted to these people; *The Vikings in Britain* by H. R. Loyn[6] and *The Vikings* by Michael Hasloch Kirkby.[7] Both can be strongly recommended. Kirkby's book is intended to be an introduction—it glides easily across the entire range of the subject pausing here and there to expand on a particular point of

[6] *The Vikings in Britain*. By H. R. LOYN. Batsford, £5.95, paper £2.75.

[7] *The Vikings*. By MICHAEL KIRKBY. Phaidon Press, £6.95.

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interest, enlivened by an attractive range of illustrations. Professor Loyn's book on the other hand presents a detailed and carefully balanced picture of the Vikings in Britain seen against the Scandinavian background.

Vikings also get a brief mention in *Barbarian Europe* by Philip Dixon,[8] one of the volumes in the new Elsevier-Phaidon series *The Making of the Past*. This series, produced under the guidance of a distinguished advisory board, will undoubtedly make a considerable impact on the pop-archaeology market. Each volume is written by an expert, lavishly illustrated, and reasonably priced. Other titles include *Rome and Byzantium* by Clive Foss and Paul Magdalino[9] and *The Roman World* by Michael Vickers.[10] In books of this length, averaging 150 pages of which about a half are illustrations, treatment of the subject matter must of necessity be superficial but the carefully chosen illustrations, many of them specially drawn and most of them in colour, add considerably to the value of each volume. Each book follows a similar plan with a preliminary chapter dealing with the history of antiquarian research and ends with a glossary. Another feature is the inclusion of "visual stories" (several pages of illustrations on a single theme) after some of the chapters. For example in Michael Vickers' book a "visual story" on the Etruscan Tombs of Cerveteri extends the chapter on the Etruscans and their world. While it is true that the illustrations bulk large in these volumes the texts are consistently worth reading: each is succinct and up-to-date. In short these books are a pleasure to look at and a useful introduction to their subjects.

Reassuringly, all the books I have discussed are well written by recognised authorities, attractively presented, and, for the most part, reasonably priced. There must be few other academic disciplines which can boast that their best communicators are among their most active scholars.

[8] *Barbarian Europe*. By PHILIP DIXON. Elsevier-Phaidon, £4.50.
[9] *Rome and Byzantium*. By CLIVE FOSS and PAUL MAGDALINO. Elsevier-Phaidon, £4.50.
[10] *The Roman World*. By MICHAEL VICKERS. Elsevier-Phaidon, £4.50.

The Sacred & Profane History Machine

The Middle Ages—By JOHN BOSSY

TO SOMEONE WHO HAS at any time inhabited the world of mediaeval history, shot off to other galaxies, and by gravity or inertia or some effect of circularity in the universe found himself ineluctably recycled into its orbit, there is an air of timeless familiarity, of a physics still mercifully Aristotelian, about the atmosphere he re-enters. Modernity seems by comparison a state of flux. The Renaissance comes and goes; what is a Reformation for one man is a Pre-Bourgeois Revolution for another, for a third the message of the medium of print, for a fourth a twitch in the graph of the age of marriage. Philip II and Louis XIV stretch and swing like flotsam and jetsam on the slow, passionate pulse of the bullion supply, the gross national product or the reproductive urge, only to reappear, when the tide goes out, much as in the days of Lord Acton. Mr Gladstone, when not pursuing prostitutes, is the Machiavelli of the smoke-filled rooms. The Spaniards turn out to be angels of Wilsonian consensus, the Swedes fanatical ideologues.

Re-enter the Middle Ages, and you will find you are miraculously no farther off than when you were a boy from the Coronation of Charlemagne, the Investiture Contest, Salians and Staufens, from Hostiensis, Thomas Aquinas, *Per Venerabilem, Unam Sanctam*, Marsiglio of Padua, the Golden Bull, the Black Death or the Great Schism. After that, if modernity intrudes; if the Wars of the Roses are a memory, and Bastard Feudalism no longer the man he was; well, you have always got the Conciliar Movement,[1] invincibly confronting the winds of change, defying the East Germans to make it out a Pre-Pre-Bourgeois Revolution or the French an avatar of the price of fish, flanked on its right hand by the Fall of Constantinople and by the migration of the herring from the Baltic on its left. Continuity does not mean stagnation: in face of the flexible traditionality of the contents (though not the mannerist typography) of Norman Zacour's *Introduction to Mediaeval Institutions*[2], which contrives in 200 pages to

[1] *Unity, Heresy and Reform 1378–1460*. By C. M. CROWDER. Edward Arnold, £9.95, paper £4.95.
[2] *An Introduction to Mediaeval Institutions*. By NORMAN ZACOUR. St James Press/St Martin's Press £5.95, $15.00.

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explain not only the traditional objects of mediaeval institutional history, but such institutions as the rural family, the building industry and the university as well, a modern historian may feel like an illustrative sample from Bossuet's *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches.*

THESE THOUGHTS come to mind because, as a nervous eighteen-year-old, I first heard about the Middle Ages in a small back bedroom in Cambridge from Walter Ullmann, whose *Mediaeval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism*,[3] whether one entirely agrees with it or not, carries a weight of authority and vision beyond the reach of the other authors in the batch. If I had read it 25 years ago, I should have understood several of his more knock-out remarks a good deal better than I did, and come away with a shape in my head more capable of surviving the lure of modernism than the one I actually put together. Ullmann's characteristics have been an immense knowledge of the primary sources of some nine centuries of European history, that is to say, of sources of a governmental kind, particularly those of the papacy; this knowledge being, in his view, a precondition for the application of "strictly historical methods", which means not taking things at second- or third-hand, knowing the corpus of what is first-hand, and paying close attention to the language people use.

Attention to language reveals the often submerged structure of ideas on which those who compose the texts are depending; the language, in Ullmann's case, has normally been Latin. He has been an historian of ideas first, and insistent on the primacy of the mind to a degree which continues to look startling; but the ideas he is interested in are ideas about government, capable of translation into facts about life through the medium of law. One of the things which has made him an awkward figure in English historiography has been a background in continental jurisprudence; this has had the great advantage of helping him to treat short-term occasions as long-term instances, and also perhaps the disadvantage of tending to present law rather more in terms of legislation and rather less in terms of transaction than is quite appropriate. Coming back to him via the French canon-law historian Gabriel le Bras, I rather miss the sense of the law as trying to make some harmonious sense of what people actually do, as well as conveying coercive instructions about what they ought and ought not to be doing. Le Bras, with

[3] *Mediaeval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism.* By WALTER ULLMANN. Elek, £6.95.

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his hundred flowers, may have been a bit complacent; Ullmann seems a bit rigid.

THE OUTLINE OF HIS BOOK is of classical simplicity. The characteristic of the revived Carolingian empire in the West, as distinct from its Roman predecessors, including its Christian ones, was to attempt, in the most radical way, to make the Christian community and the political entity coincide. It was a community of the baptised; its rationale, its ends, were transcendentally Christian. It was a Christian, baptismal, rebirth or renaissance. Taking advantage of the weak position in which the emperor was placed by the fact that though his rule was of God his consecration was priestly, the popes of the 11th century took upon themselves the undivided task of ruling the Christian community and guiding it towards its supernatural end, something which, in their view, emperors were incompetent to do. Seeking a footing on which to found an authority which could not be so undermined, emperors found it, in the 12th century, in the imperial Roman law, in whose principles and practice they found a secular justification for their existence.

From this point the Christian community could be considered as two-fold, a realm of nature and a realm of grace; the position received its theoretical formulation with the recovery of Aristotle in the 13th century, most memorably in the writings of Aquinas and Dante. The need of government to explore its secularity led to the pursuit of available sources for the knowledge of secular man, which were to be found above all in the literature of the classical world. Passing from emperors to kings and from kings to Italian city-states, the task of creating a secular, human polity required that an increasingly clear definition and scope be given to the secular, humanist culture which it called for in its citizens.

Thus was the natural man reborn in a humanist renaissance, which is taken to be strictly parallel to the baptismal renaissance of the Carolingians. The claims of the universal Church or the Pope were not in principle defied, there remained the universe of grace as well as that of nature; but they were taken to have reference to other-worldly, not this-worldly ends. Finally the practice of humanist culture not within a context of political or social purposes but as an object in itself, which is what one normally means by the Renaissance, followed in the 15th century, with results which Ullmann seems a little undecided how to judge, though among the beneficial ones has been the power to grasp such an historical sequence as has been described. On the whole, perhaps, it was a falling-back:

> the Renaissance was the proud, sublime and noble *heir* of that rebirth which culminated in the rehabilitation of man as a citizen, whereas the long-term effect of the same rebirth was the modern democratic state in its pluralist configuration.

SUMMARY CANNOT CONVEY the width of reference on which this rugged outline is supported. Much of it will probably be familiar from previous works in the Ullmann canon, of which none the less it seems to offer a sharper and more extended synthesis. Fundamental criticisms have been made, and may be in order: to a reader not very competent to judge it seems to overdo the reduction of everything to one or two moving principles, to lay its weight a little often on a region of the mind which has the disadvantages of abstraction without the compensations of creativity; and towards the end to be struggling to cope with a diversifying matter under rubrics designed for an age when things were more of a whole. That said, I think it would be self-destructive not to recognise that here we have the fruits of a large and original historical mind, capable of renewing its tradition without attempting to abolish ancient landmarks, pursuing its insights indifferent to fashion.

One subject strikes me as illustrating some of

Daphne Bennett
King Without a Crown
Albert, Prince Consort of England 1819–1861
Queen Victoria's excessive devotion to Albert made her overlay his memory with superhuman attributes, presenting him as impossibly virtuous, rigidly correct and formal—and really rather dull. The truth, as Daphne Bennett's researches into unpublished correspondence has revealed, is very different. Albert was lively and sensitive, a man of high intelligence, a devoted husband and attentive father, a gifted musician and discriminating art-collector, and a statesman wise beyond his years.
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the virtues and shortcomings of Ullmann's method. The theme of the book, one way and another, is baptismal regeneration, but it offers no sketch of a history or social description of baptism in the period to which it refers, and if one were attempted I am not sure whether it might not cast doubt on some of the general views suggested. I take it as given that the Carolingian monarchy assumed baptism as the foundation of its theory and practice, but am not sure that that makes it quite so transcendental an institution as is proposed. The Carolingian state seems, by accident or design, to have given to Europe what became the primary social effect of the baptismal process, the institution of godparents.

Godparenthood was indeed in principle transcendent, a new kindred for a new man. In popular practice, mediaeval and post-mediaeval, it became a subtle interfusion of fleshly and Christian kinship, of the old man and the new. It seems a wobbly foundation for a transcendental kingdom. On the other hand, can one quite speak of secularity in the case of states which, from the 14th century to the 18th or 19th, had no other record of the entry of citizens into their commonwealth than the baptismal registers kept by their various clergies? It is true that in some 15th-century Italian states one finds traces of a secular record as well as an ecclesiastical one; but their difference did not lie in the recording of births as against the recording of baptisms, but in whether or not, in recording the baptism, they recorded the godparents as well. To see the society of western Christians at this less elevated level is to wonder about some of the dramatic transitions for which Ullmann argues, while feeling that his special *locus standi* has enabled him to put his finger on a truly central matter.

THIS WAS AT ANY RATE how it appeared to many of the dissidents discussed by Malcolm Lambert in his estimable *Mediaeval Heresy*,[4] an attempt at a general grasp of a slippery subject more pragmatic, more extensive, and less intellectually inclined or theoretically pointed than Gordon Leff's comparatively recent work. Together with R. I. Moore's *Origins of European Dissent*,[5] which stops with the Cathars at the beginning of the 13th century, they provide a solid and variegated reading-list on the subject. Personally I should want to leaven the lump a bit with Norman Cohn's *Pursuit of the Millennium*,

[4] *Mediaeval Heresy: Popular Movements from Bogomil to Hus*. By MALCOLM LAMBERT. Edward Arnold, £15.

[5] *The Origins of European Dissent*. By R. I. MOORE. Allen Lane, £8.50.

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and especially with Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, or at least by selected extracts from that slapdash, self-indulgent, but finally gripping, invaluable and most significant work. Perhaps this is the heresy of a modernist. Neither Cohn nor Le Roy Ladurie quite make Lambert's canon of respectable writing on his subject. Cohn gets referred to in two paragraphs which seem to have been inserted (at the request of the publisher's reader?) after the book had been written, and seem willing to wound yet oddly afraid to strike. Le Roy Ladurie, whose book must certainly have appeared at a most inconvenient time, gets six words in a footnote devoted to a much less jolly version of the jolliest piece of information it contains. I have just about enough palaeography to deduce from a mis-spelling in the book's title that the six words were added by Lambert in manuscript to his proofs. I should think it likely that, if he had had time to consider it, he would have recommended towards *Montaillou*, as towards Cohn, a posture of "grave caution."

THE INTENDING READER may like to know what both Lambert and Le Roy Ladurie have to say on the subject to which Lambert's footnote refers. It concerns the most formidable of all dissident movements in mediaeval Europe, that of the Cathars, or Albigensians as they used to be called, a persuasion originating in opposition to the Byzantine Orthodox Church in Bulgaria, and between the 12th and the 14th century, when the Inquisition stamped it out, sustaining in southern France and other parts of Mediterranean Europe a community certainly anti-Catholic (and anti-Orthodox) and in many ways anti-Christian. It concerns in particular the doings of a "perfect"—roughly, a priest—of that persuasion, who circulated about the eastern Pyrenees and adjacent parts of Spain in the last phases of the movement, during the early 14th century.

Belibasta, which was his name, is for Lambert a sad sign of the decadence of a once vigorous community dedicated to a radical hatred of the flesh; he "kept a concubine and sold the *consolamentum* [the Cathar sacrament]." I cannot remember Le Roy Ladurie mentioning the second half of this couple; his version of the first is that Belibasta indeed had a concubine, and was imprudent enough, while preaching the vileness of the flesh, to get her pregnant. He also had a faithful friend and follower, a shepherd called Pierre Maury who was, rather unwillingly, looking for a wife; Belibasta said he had just the girl for him, produced his girl-friend, married the two of them, left them together for three nights

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(while he fasted), then took her back and sent the shepherd on his travels. I cannot believe that grave caution is the right note to strike here, but it does have a moral, and not quite the one you might suspect, in the fact that Maury not only seems to have borne Belibasta no malice, but felt that he had done something particularly witty and elegant, and was more devoted to him after than before.

I repeat the story, not to calumniate the Cathar ministry, but to suggest that I am not sure whether people joined dissident communities because, as Lambert assumes, they felt the Catholic clergy were unworthy and needed reform. Many of the representatives of Catharism in and around Montaillou were, by modern standards, crooks, but that did not prevent half the people in the area from treating them as saints.

A WAY OUT OF THIS DIFFICULTY is sketched by Moore, who says that, by comparison with what one may call the evangelical wing of 12th-century dissent, notably with the Waldensians, the Cathars were rather a traditional lot, locating holiness not in an "agonised search for the divine" but in the "exact and impersonal observance of prescribed ritual and regulation." He has prudently drawn, via Peter Brown, on the anthropological tradition which provides the structure for *Montaillou* and is clearly uncongenial to Lambert.

The results of his effort seem at first reading a bit impenetrable, and sometimes unsound, as when he quotes Mary Douglas, with little historical support that I can think of, to the effect that a climate of social and ideological change is "unpropitious to the maintenance of a religion centred upon ritual." But he seems to have got closer than Lambert to some of the reasons why the Cathar community was the sort of thing it was, and why it throve in Languedoc. His suggestion would seem to be that in a region which lacked persuasive political authority there was a need for the kind of authority which is associated with personal holiness; that to qualify for this holiness entailed a radical separation from the ordinary course of social relations, for which the renunciation of the flesh, in both its senses, has been a constant symbol; and that the holiness in question was more a matter of power than of virtue, entailing the capacity to do wonders, to heal, to compose conflicts and to forgive sins, and evoking in the common man such feelings as a desire to drink the holy one's bathwater.

This is a scheme in which the story of Belibasta and Pierre Maury may begin to make more sense than it does for Lambert. Withdrawal from Catholicism was not a necessary precondition for such charisma, as the cases of Ireland or of Italy from St Francis to St Bernardino may demonstrate. But it was plausible to see the task of administering the Church's sacraments, which fell upon the parochial clergy, as an implication in the world of flesh and blood, in the social and material universe in general, which was not compatible with true holiness or transcendent saving powers; it was to this popular puritan instinct that the anti-incarnational theology imported by the Cathars from the Balkans appealed.

IT IS TEMPTING TO SAY that if the social constitution of the Catholic west from 800 to 1200 had been as transcendental as Ullmann holds, we might expect to find it breeding materialist heresies rather than spiritualist ones. But this may be a debating point, and Ullmann is entitled to the last word. Peter Richards, in his *The Mediaeval Leper and his Northern Heirs*,[6] has enterprisingly produced evidence from modern Scandinavia to illuminate the history of a curse whose mediaeval treatment, he rightly says, is more a part of the history of Christianity than of contagious disease. There is a startling convergence between what he has to say and some comments of Moore on the interpenetration of the notions of leper and heretic in the 12th century, both being taken as agents of uncleanness perilous to the salvation of the community. The history of leprosy, like the history of the plague[7]—in the sense, for example, that people's natural reaction was to go out and massacre the Jews—may serve, alas, to make Ullmann's point that the orthodox population of mediaeval Europe was a community of the baptised. How refreshing, after this, to come, at the end of Lambert's narrative of those who dissented from them, on the admirable, eirenic and surviving Moravians.

[6] *The Mediaeval Leper and His Northern Heirs.* By PETER RICHARDS. D. S. Brewer, £6.

[7] *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348–1530.* By JOHN HATCHER. Macmillan Press, £1.75.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Writing a History

The Savage War

By Alistair Horne

I THINK IT WAS Somerset Maugham who remarked somewhere that the two hardest decisions in a man's life are getting into bed, and then getting out of it again; the latter infinitely the harder of the two. The point is hardly to be argued, but when it comes to writing books I find precisely the reverse is true. Nothing is more difficult than starting. An absolute conviction that, after years of research, you have nothing significant to say induces paralysis; an icy constipation seizes up your prose.

By comparison, ending is a cinch. So this time I thought I would be really clever and cheat; I would plunge *in medias res*, then come back to write the Preface—with all its essential explanations and apologies—once I had some idea of what I was doing. I did. It was all wrong. In sleepless despair I rewrote it five times. It was still wrong; and my publishers, Macmillan, agreed. I appealed to them for help; then one day I intercepted an internal memorandum from one editor to another: ". . . A. H. should rewrite the opening on a much more personal note, explaining why he came to write the book (and 'Macmillans told me to do so' will *not* be acceptable!)."

But if there was one point describing the genesis of the book that really rang true, it was that my publishers had indeed "told me" to write it! This was, in fact, the first time it had happened that way; in ten previous books I had produced the idea, they had paid the advance. I had just (in autumn 1972) published the book on Allende's *Chile*[1] (which, among other things, earned me the undying opprobrium of the Left for depicting the new Folk Hero as something less than a leader of blameless competence), and was in that glumly familiar state comparable to ending a *grande affaire* without any substitute in sight. Then my editor at Macmillan suggested "why don't you write a full-scale history of the Algerian War? We don't think it's ever been done properly, certainly not in English. And 'HM' is personally very interested in the idea. He'd love to talk to you about it."

There then followed a series of conversations with HM (as the still very active head of the firm and some-time Prime Minister, is known to his associates) that were to prove among the most stimulating parts of all my research. Having been Churchill's Minister-Resident in Algiers during the Second World War, he remained deeply attached to the country and its problems.

"And when de Gaulle came to power and I was Prime Minister, so often all our difficulties seemed to stem from that one word—Algeria. That war was a seminal event in our times, and with your background of modern French History I know you could do it. . . ."

My objections that I was not strong on the Algerian, on the Arab background, that it might be too soon to write, were waved aside.

"Do it before we're all dead, and the facts are forgotten."

He for one seemed to have forgotten little; old age had not dimmed his remarkable recall of detail and dialogue. The conversations ranged, with superb parallels and admirable relevance, from the first Roman Republic to Cromwell's Commonwealth to the advantages of ministerial rule from the Great Houses of England—but always back to de Gaulle and his Algerian nightmare. He spoke of de Gaulle generally with a mixture of deep admiration, and irritation. He seemed obsessed by his cap measurement.

"Winston with his great big head could think both backwards and forwards in time, but de Gaulle with that little pinhead of his could only look backwards, to Louis XIV. But he was one of the bravest men I ever knew."

Nervously I noted that I took a size in *képis* only $\frac{1}{8}$" larger than de Gaulle, that to compress into one volume a whole war that had lasted over seven years, with immense complexities,

ALISTAIR HORNE'S *"A Savage War of Peace; Algeria 1954–62" is published by Macmillan on October 20. Among his contributions to* ENCOUNTER *are "The Guerrillas of Teoponte" (December 1971) and "Commandante Pepe" (July 1971).*

[1] *Small Earthquake in Chile* (Macmillan, 1972).

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was a daunting project. But HM's enthusiasm was infectious. I promised I would go away and think about it.

AT HOME I unearthed a folder full of cuttings, notes and letters that I had assembled in Paris, back in 1960, while working on *The Price of Glory* (1962). They were mostly about "Barricades Week" (in 1960) when the *Pied Noir* settlers of Algeria had taken to the streets of Algiers in a style a little reminiscent of the Paris Commune, digging themselves in behind barricades in protest against de Gaulle's declared policy of "self-determination" for the Algerians—and, more immediately, against the sacking of the beloved, tough *para* general, Massu. For a week the Algiers "insurgents" held out, menacingly receiving tacit support from Massu's *paras*. It looked as if—not for the first, or last, time during the Algerian War—France herself might be seized by civil war.

My notes recalled meeting, in a Left Bank bar late one night at the beginning of that week, one of the more hardened members of the foreign press corps. Very much in his cups, he was apparently more disturbed by the barricades that had been thrown up in his own household than by what was going on in Algiers. But at the end of a week that seemed like a lifetime, I had seen the same journalist with genuine tears of emotion, and relief, in his eyes on listening to de Gaulle's miraculous broadcast which brought France back from the brink.

"The history of France" says André Maurois, "has the singular privilege of impassioning the peoples of the earth to the point where they all take part in French quarrels."

How true it was of "Barricades Weeks" was attested by those old cuttings and notes, so evocative of the passions and drama of the moments that had become otherwise dulled by the passage of time. And, with Viet Nam still raging and Ulster on the boil, the more I read about the Algerian War the more poignantly relevant it seemed to a world that forgets everything and learns nothing. I decided to go ahead and write the book.

AFTER A PRELIMINARY "read-in" at the London Library, I made a first call in France to Nanterre University, every inch of its unappealing barracks covered with layer upon layer of revolutionary graffiti. But it also houses probably the world's finest library of contemporary documentation.

There I began to compile a bibliography which multiplied daily like some hideous amoeba. The number of books already published in France ran into four figures, many of them personal apologias or partisan in one direction or another, but almost all meriting attention. The periodicals and other printed sources could be more readily measured by the cubic metre. French Government papers were still shrouded by the French equivalent of the "30-year rule." On the other hand, they had been ruthlessly plundered by politicians, officials and soldiers for the writing of their own memoirs (in the last days of the war, one group of such freebooters allegedly took away documents from the Algiers *Gouvernement Général* by the sackful, which were never to surface again).

Many of the owners of the "private collection" later were almost over-eager to put them at my disposal; and I concluded at the end of my researches that not a great deal of documentation of intrinsic value remained unavailable. (I was also encouraged by the warning of that charming man, and good historian, Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, against "the belief that the immortal and everlasting truth is to be found in the use of documents alone.")

Meanwhile I was preparing lists of the leading personalities and eye-witnesses—both French and Algerian—who had survived the war and whom it seemed essential to interview. Where to draw the line presented an even graver quandary than the bibliography. Half-a-million French servicemen multiplied by seven years of war made a terrifying total. And what French regular officer had *not* served in Algeria, what politician, *fonctionnaire* and journalist had *not* been involved in the war? In cowardice I half-hoped that my task would be lightened by the refusal (at least in France) of most of the participants to discuss a war of such horrors, so divisive of the country and which (from the point of view of national pride) had proved so deeply humiliating in its ending. After all, in writing books about earlier French tragedies, such as 1940, 1916, and even as far back as 1870, had I not encountered reticence and occasionally downright hostility?

But this time I was to be proved amazingly wrong—which left me reflecting that half the joy of writing about French history lies in the sheer unexpectedness of the French character. If anything, my problem turned out to be one of *embarras de richesses*. Everybody (or almost everybody) wanted to talk—and talk. Torturers confessed how—through exigency—they had come to torture. Ex-OAS killers revealed why and how they had killed. Those who had opposed the war with all their heart told how they had crossed the frontiers of treason to do so. Senior generals who had rebelled against de Gaulle spoke of their years in prison with the unashamedness

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of old lags. Former members of de Gaulle's intimate entourage discussed his motives for ending the war with painstaking honesty, and fellow-authors opened their most sacred files to me.

I was, I must admit, hugely helped by (among many) two principal allies in Paris. The late Christopher Ewart-Biggs, then Minister in Paris, had many *tuyaux* to the governmental and civil service Establishment which fructified into informants whose frankness I doubt would have been the same without his intervention. He had also been the first British *chargé-d'affaires* to Algeria, loved the Algerians (alas, on his death, he left a half-finished novel about the war) and, I suspect, was loved by them. (Later in Algeria, but before Christopher's death, I was to meet an English couple, flotsam stranded by the receding Raj, who remarked "Ewart-Biggs would get up to bail us out of jail at 4 a.m. in the morning—can you think of many HMG's reps who'd do that . . .?" I couldn't.) Then there was the Socialist Senator from Les Landes, Gérard Minvielle, and his charming wife, Jany, whose irresistible voice on the telephone opened many a door on the political Left that might otherwise have remained closed—or at best, reluctantly *entr'ouvert* to me.

As for the Army, from many old contacts of my own, that I could cope with.

Finally, in response to all my entreaties and badgering, I received but one downright rebuff—from a lady whose novels I admired unreservedly, her political acumen a little less, but who had been a focal figure in the whole anti-war movement. On a fragment of squared paper, apparently ripped out of a child's *cahier de mathématiques* came the following:

> *Cher Alistair Horne*
> I have written in *La Force des Choses* all my recollections on the Algerian War. The best is for you refer to it.
> *Avec mes meilleurs sentiments*
> S. de BEAUVOIR

It was impossible to refrain from the riposte that humbler authors sometimes found themselves having to omit half their material from the finished book. End of dialogue with S. de Beauvoir.

NEXT, AFTER ABOUT six months' work, there occurred an unhappy setback of the kind that all too regularly befalls non-fiction writers; at least, it has happened to me on at least five past books. Somebody else was working on the self-same subject. (Why, I have often speculated, are publishers so distrustful of each other that they can't let it be known what books they have commissioned? Or why can't they even resort to the anonymity of a computer that would flash lights and ring bells when two similar punched cards are fed into it, without revealing the identity of the author?) This time my competitor was more highly-powered in his own field of expertise than I, with a special knowledge and *entrée* into the Arab world that I had not—Sir Anthony Nutting. Gloomily I considered chucking in my hand, or proposing a collaborate deal whereby he did the Algerian side and I the French. Then, to my surprise and relief, with the utmost grace—and regret—Nutting withdrew from the contest.

Reassured, I set off on my first trip to Algeria—equipped with letters patent to President Boumedienne, signed by HM and composed in courtly language that Lord Melbourne could not have improved upon. I reckoned they would be irresistible. Initially, my wife and I based ourselves at a glistening new tourist complex at Zéralda, on the site—appropriately enough—of the barracks once tenanted by the élite French 1st Para Regiment of the Foreign Legion. The 1st REP had fought many of the hardest battles against the FLN; then, utterly disaffected, in 1961 it had spearheaded the "Generals' Putsch" against de Gaulle. When the "Putsch" collapsed, the 1st REP, dissolved and with its leaders under arrest, marched out from Zéralda forever, bravely singing Edith Piaf's haunting "*Je ne regrette rien.*"

Under umbrella pines cooing with doves there still existed the remnants of typically French barracks, bearing faded lettering of "*Poste de Commandement*", *etc.* that the Algerians had not yet got around to effacing. Like many other relics of the 130-year-long *Présence Française* that I visited elsewhere in Algeria, Zéralda was permeated with ghosts. But, although it was barely more than a decade since the last *Pied Noir* had left, somehow those ghosts seemed to belong already to almost as remote a past as the ruins left behind by the Roman conquerors.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS immediately presented paradox. On the one hand, Algeria was still so very French—from the sign-posts, the excellent roads and ghastly telephones, to the culture (95% of all Algerians still speak French) and the style of bureaucracy; from the prosperous farms of the *Mitidja* with their acacias and vines that looked as if they might have been lifted from Languedoc, to Algiers and Oran (that reminded one so vividly of a rather seedy Nice).

Yet, on the other hand, so strongly had the new inhabitants of those farms and cities imposed their imprint that it was impossible to think of Algeria being anything but a totally

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Moslem, Arabo-Berber society. How, one soon wondered, could any *Présence Française* of a million *Pieds Noirs* have maintained itself for long if de Gaulle had once achieved his ideal of "self-determination"—meaning majority rule—for the nine million Algerians?

IN A RENAULT MANUFACTURED in Romania (itself a symbol of modern-day Algeria's shrewd balancing act between West and East) we travelled widely across the immensity of Algeria. I had not quite appreciated that, in square miles, it was the tenth biggest country in the world. We drove from the sea-washed absinthe-perfumed paradise of Roman Tipasa, which had so beguiled that great Algerian-born writer Camus, up to snow-covered (in May) Atlas peaks where the road disappeared terrifyingly in a landslide; through the ravishing broom-covered mountains of Kabylia, where the Berber *douars* sit atop razor-backed ridges to protect them from the foes of countless past wars; down into the hostile gorges of the Aurès where the first spark of FLN revolt ignited in 1954, and beyond into the endless sands of the Sahara.

Led by agile young Algerians and stifling a terror of heights, I leaped from rooftop to rooftop across the narrow streets of the Algiers Casbah, to study how Yacef's Freedom Fighters had escaped from the deadly net thrown round them by Massu's *paras* in the renowned "Battle of Algiers." I was taken to places in the nigh-impenetrable *bled* that had remained FLN strongholds almost throughout the war. Exploring this breath-takingly beautiful, but hard, country helped one understand one or two simple, but extremely basic, facts.

One was that most of it was guerrilla country *par excellence*, and a nightmare for a conventional army fighting a defensive war. If it testified to the staggering endurance of the FLN *djoundi*, equipped with primitive weapons and suffering under appalling conditions, so it did to the remarkable achievements of the French Army which—in military terms alone—had virtually won the fighting war by 1960.

The second was to comprehend why the *Pieds Noirs* struggled so stubbornly to keep hold of this exigent demi-paradise, the only homeland most of them knew; just as the Algerians fought with such ferocity to regain it.

I LOOKED INTO the faces of a tough, dourly admirable people; the eroded features of the elderly, still with their memories—good as well as bad—of the *Présence Française*; the bold expressions of the younger generation, arrogant with passionate nationalism and justifiable pride in the remarkable economic achievements of the new Algeria. But when it came to conducting the sort of interviews I had had in France with war-time leaders, I soon found myself faced with far more serious obstacles than mere landslides.

Those high walls that surround houses in Algiers—the delightful courtyards concealed in total privacy behind squalid exteriors in the Casbah—were also, I found, symptomatic of a deeply rooted instinct for secrecy, developed over five generations of French suzerainty. Many Algerians looked over their shoulders nervously when I probed into such sensitive issues as splits in the war-time leadership. And not without reason. It was from these splits that Boumedienne has emerged ascendant. Moreover, two of the *neuf historiques* who launched the revolt, Krim and Khider, were mysteriously murdered in exile in Europe after the war. Ben Bella remains in prison, no one knows where. Other former leaders live, like Trotsky, nervously in disfavour abroad.

One whom I had to seek out in Switzerland was protected by a Cerberus-like dog which flew at me—though his owner assured me sweetly that "he only kills other Algerians!" Vital informants would not return my calls (even supposing I could get through on the rickety telephone system). Or they would not turn up, having made a date (Arabs as a whole—unlike S. de Beauvoir—eschew the discourtesy of a direct "no"). Or they would ask me to veil their utterances with impenetrable anonymity. Or they simply had terrible memories. Happily some, however—and often those with apparently most to fear—were surprisingly forthcoming.

Another disappointment I soon encountered—in contrast to France—was the almost total lack of available written documentation. There was depressing imprecision about dates, and details. For instance, it was not easy even to discover exactly when President Boumedienne was born, whether it was in Oranie or Constantinois, at opposite ends of the country, or whether he was married or not. The savage nature of the guerrilla war was partly to blame for the lack of documentation, in that "war diaries" could seldom be kept; also it had to be remembered, many of the combatants were not literate.

Finally, there was, clearly, a totally different concept of History to that held in the West, holding an altogether lower priority. Past events, whether they occurred yesterday or in AD 600, tended to be consigned to the same vast limbo of disinterest. In the Casbah, for instance, there is not the smallest plaque or commemoration (such as one finds everywhere in France to martyrs of the *Résistance* of 1940-44) to indicate

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where such heroes of the Revolution as Ali-la-Pointe fought and died against Massu's *paras*. It was part of the whole outlook exemplified by the remark I often heard Algerians make about the war: "The page is turned . . .!" Magnanimous, but unhelpful to the historian.

RETURNING TO Algeria, and Tunisia, in October 1973, I ran into further bad luck. The "Ramadan War" had broken out, and that was the only conflict many of my interviewees could think about. I spent an hour with that ebullient paternalist, President Bourguiba, who was most informative; then ended with a violent denunciation of Israel which—although the interview was supposedly "off the record"—appeared on all the TV screens of Tunisia that night. The rest of my days in Tunisia were dogged with misfortune. My tape recorder, together with the tape of the Bourguiba interview, disappeared mysteriously (fortunately I had also kept written notes and several months later the Tunisian Government came up with their transcript). I had attached to me as dragoman/interpreter a disastrous figure—he might have been invented by Graham Greene—called M. Trikki. Whenever a key rendezvous was in the offing, Trikki would somehow arrange to have the car implacably not start, or blow a bald tyre at high speed, or he would start a fight in a post-office resulting in a lengthy police intervention, or he would simply not appear at all. He also had an engaging habit of only telling one what *he thought* one would like to hear. We visited a Bedouin encampment where the inhabitants were patently seized by inhospitality verging on the murderous; and when teasingly I asked M. Trikki to translate their abuse, he answered "they are saying, *'greetings, welcome to the foreigners to our homes'* . . . ."

In Algiers I hovered for days in the Hotel Saint-George—where, a brass plaque recalls, General Eisenhower had set up his Allied Headquarters in 1942—waiting for a repeatedly promised interview with President Boumedienne; little knowing that in fact he was on a crisis tour of Moscow, Riyadh, and other points east in an endeavour to save Egypt's chestnuts on the Suez front. I passed my time instructing the President's beautiful interpreter as to the tactical reasons for Sadat's débâcle on the Bitter Lake (none of which had appeared in the loyal Algerian press), and pursuing the contacts I had been unable to take up in the spring. At long last, I decided to cut my losses and return home without seeing Boumedienne (I feel now that I would probably never have got to see him, or if I had, would

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have got little out of him, and that I had achieved just about all I could in the Maghreb). As I was about to leave, blanching at the sight of my bill at the Saint-George, a sinister leather-clad motor cyclist roared up and grabbed it out of my hand, with orders from the Presidency that on no account was I to pay. In vain I protested. Consulting the British Embassy I was told: no, it was not a *nunc dimittis* and we would be very embarrassed were you to refuse. . . .

IN FEBRUARY of 1974 while the miners-versus-Heath were tearing Britain to pieces, I resumed my researches in Paris. Loaned a flat on the tip of the Ile St. Louis, perhaps the most enviable position in all Europe, with the frosty morning sun rising exactly along the Quai, I relished the sheer beauty of my surroundings and the real compassion of the Parisians for our predicament as a marvellous sop to the anguish at home. It was a happy and fruitful time, and I interviewed five ex-premiers in office during the Algerian War.

Mendès-France, with his face of a pessimistic toreador, looking deathly ill but superbly articulate—surely the most intelligent and fascinating man of the Fourth Republic, and the only one who (had he survived in office) might have prevented the endless tragedy of the war.

Guy Mollet, "the man of Suez", who declared he would refuse to talk about that episode, then discussed it for forty-five minutes, and who flattered me by talking throughout in French without once revealing that he was also a Professor of English.

Michel Debré, de Gaulle's first Prime Minister, whom I had to ask with greatest diffidence whether there was any truth in General Salan's repeated allegation that he, Debré, had been involved in a conspiracy to bump-off the general with a bazooka (Debré, of course, waved aside the allegations with contempt).

I was received by François Mitterrand, in a newly acquired house of *haut bourgeois* elegance dominated by a small dachshund clad in a tartan waistcoat that seemed curiously incongruous for the leader of the new *Front Populaire*. He admitted forthrightly that, yes, as Minister of Interior to Mendès-France he had then been a hard-liner on Algeria.

Then, among the military there was Jacques Massu, still every inch the tough front-line soldier, not quite so big as I had expected, but with a face like one of those Swiss bears carved out of wood, refusing to deny that his *paras* had resorted to *la torture* in Algeria or to condemn its use. Raoul Salan, the complex "Mandarin", his silver hair alternately tinted yellow and mauve, surrounded by orientalia from the Indo-China which has infatuated him and so many other French officers of that generation, speaking quite unaffectedly of his leadership of the *OAS* and his ensuing years in prison. Finally, Challe, the leader of the "Generals Putsch" against de Gaulle, perhaps the most tragically admirable of all the principal actors of the war, his voice now reduced to a painful whisper after a throat cancer operation. Ex-Governor General Lacoste alarmed me by gripping my thigh and assuring me that the *paras* who had inflicted the *gégène* were but "*jeunes gens sportifs*" and that the torture hadn't really hurt. Maître Teitgen, who had resigned his post in protest against the use of that torture, supplied me with material which kept me awake with nightmares many a night. There was the brave ethnologist, Germaine Tillion, who had survived Ravensbruck and still held a regular *salon* for deportees at her house, and who had fought so hard for a liberal, third-force solution in Algeria.[2] There was the fervent intellectual, Jacques Soustelle, who concluded our conversation on the way to the *Assemblée* at terrifying speed in a Mini, talking all the way with both hands off the wheel. And, at other times, there were the bizarre encounters with incognito killers, still on the run from one side or the other, in discreet Alpine *Stübli*.

MICHAEL HOLROYD has remarked that "One privilege of being a biographer is that you meet, usually on friendly terms, people you have always wanted to meet. . . ." Something similar is I suppose true of the writer of contemporary history. I was genuinely sorry when the interviewing came to an end; though, if I had truly been industrious (and rich as Croesus), it could have gone on forever. Then followed another eighteen months of hard slogging at the typewriter, of checking and double-checking.

HAD ONE'S OWN VIEWS modified in the course of the work? I know for one thing, I came out with a stronger conviction than before as to the fundamental wickedness of torture of all kinds, and its feckless counter-productivity. I felt left with a deep pessimism at the intrinsic failures of West European Society that had been highlighted by the Algerian war, and that seemed to be as insoluble in the world today as then (be it in Ulster, Southern Africa, the Middle East, or Chile). There is the failure to combat civil insurrection without resort to the means one condemns in one's enemy; the failure of the West to comprehend Third World aspirations, of

[2] See Germaine Tillion's articles in ENCOUNTER in 1958, "The Terrorist" (December) and "Algeria in 1958" (July).

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which Boumedienne's Algeria is so much a leader, as much as it is a product itself of the Algerian War; and the failure of Third Force "liberals" everywhere to prevail against the extremist minority on either side. Whether in revolutionary war, or within the British Trades Unions, it always seems to be the *Montagne* that triumphs over the *Gironde* in modern times. The pessimism I felt extended to the outcome of the Algerian War. Could it all have ended differently? Was there any time when moderation might have prevailed? Looking back on it now, with an immense amount of hindsight, I doubt whether any permanent settlement could have been achieved which would not have led eventually to the expulsion, or at best, to the emigration of the whole European minority.

I suppose, perhaps most of all, I did to some extent review my previously much more critical appreciation of General de Gaulle, as a result of the role he fulfilled in the Algerian War. One of the great difficulties biographers of de Gaulle face is in appraising him as one person; there were too many different de Gaulles.

De Gaulle, the military innovator of the 1930s, still seems to me to be a vastly over-inflated figure (besides which he did, after all, fudge the record on the use of airpower in his two editions of '*Vers l'Armée de Métier*.') De Gaulle, the only French tank commander to bloody the Germans in 1940, has also been built up to far too great a stature by the Gaullist mythologues. De Gaulle, the man of the *Résistance*, however prickly and difficult, remains undeniably great. De Gaulle, the President, undoubtedly resurrected France; but the methods he chose did impose the most incalculable and enduring damage upon the Western Alliance. But it is when one comes to de Gaulle and Algeria that he is at his best as well as his most unprincipled. On at least three separate occasions—in May 1958, January 1960, and April 1961—his remarkable sense of timing and his truly magical influence saved France. He committed terrible errors, and perpetrated unpardonable injustices upon those who trusted him. But at the end of it all only he and he alone could have got France out of Algeria without civil war. That is, possibly, I think how history will rate de Gaulle's "finest hour."

I BADE FAREWELL to the book with heavy gloom. There were parts which I could not bear to read again, and I resolutely set my face against including among the illustrations any of the countless atrocity photographs of tortured Algerians, of European children with their throats slit, of Algerians with their noses cut off by other Algerians. Unsympathetic and often

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violent as they so often were, I was filled with sadness for the *petits Pieds Noirs* uprooted from their homes to an essentially unloving France; and sadness, too, for those Algerians (notably the women) for whom independence has not necessarily brought the liberation promised by the "Revolution."

Unavoidable, too, was the sense of personal emptiness. It was as if one had been abandoned by a hard but utterly fulfilling mistress. There was now nothing, no replacement, immediately to fill the enormous emptiness; except stinging clouds of self-doubt and unwantedness. Instead of recalcitrant FLN leaders, it was newspaper editors and TV producers who seemed never to answer one's calls, or who made insincere noises about the book being "just *too* good for serialisation." Had those nearly four years of hard work, half as long as the Algerian War itself, been worthwhile? Had one managed to produce anything new, and of lasting value? I suppose only the reader can tell.

There is at least one thing I know—in terms of profitability, like most other members of our underprivileged profession in these days of inflation, I realised that it would be most unlikely to have proved "worthwhile." With all that foreign research and interviews alone swallowing up *one-fifth* of a not ungenerous publisher's advance, once other costs and tax had been deducted I would be extremely lucky if the four years work earned me as much as a typist's wage. Could one afford to attempt such an undertaking ever again? Perhaps the "Savage War" of writing contemporary history also has its victims.

Visit to Leonard

A guy in the asylum is wearing
A University of Chicago T-shirt.
He leads me down his corridor, swearing
Gently in a foreign language, hurt

By the absence of his favourite nurse
This morning. The ward is big and bright,
Like an average American graduate. Curse-
Words petering out, he invites me to sit

On the lap of an ultramodern chair.
He gets me coffee from the machine,
And carries it over like a good waiter
—Despite wearing slippers and a daft grin.

"I've come to see Leonard Kelly",
I state. "Can you fetch him please."
He bows, nods, and says, "Willingly",
And slopes off like a slow disease

Infecting continents at a snail's pace.
A white-coated porter passes.
Suddenly, I see Leonard, his crazed face
Imprisoned behind thick-lensed glasses.

My original helper shuffles away.
Leonard squats nearby vacantly.
He does not listen to what I say.
I shut up, and sip my coffee.

Paul Groves

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MEMOIR

Harry Johnson

By Edward Shils

ONCE ON A WALK in the Cotswolds during the war, R. H. Tawney suddenly said to me, "Shils, have you ever pressed a mole in your hand?" I said that I had never done so. He told me that if I were to do so, I would be surprised by its strength. "It is all muscle. . . ." I recalled Tawney's words not long after I first met Harry Johnson. He seemed to be intellectually "all muscle." Physically too he gave an impression of tremendous power under easy self-control. He was about five feet ten inches tall, broad, thick-chested, inclined towards a solid plumpness. He had remarkable large, sparkling black eyes, ruddy cheeks, shining black hair. A matter-of-factness, a dry tone of speech without flourishes or dramatic emphases was as characteristic of his conversation as it was of his writings. He did not pause when he spoke. There were no hems and haws. He spoke as he wrote in long sentences, always grammatically correct and coherent, reaching out through numerous subordinate clauses to bring in relevant but not usually perceived aspects of the subject, and to reveal connections which are seldom noticed.

He always gave the impression of possessing a serene and powerful intellectual and physical vitality which permeated everything he did or said. There were no hollow spaces in him; there was also none of that excess of energy which is wasted in fidgeting, moving things around pointlessly, speaking without saying anything. All this energy was mastered and applied to the production of something tangible whether it was the sharpening of a pupil's dissertation, commenting on a seminar paper, the delivery of a lecture, the writing of an article, or carving wooden figurines at seminars and conferences (or during conversations) from which his attention never wandered. In conversation or a discussion, he observed all that others said and responded justly to every significant point. In the time of his plumpness which for a period passed into stoutness, there was never anything sluggish or pulpy about him. When for a time his figure was at its maximum, he evoked my recollection of Babe Ruth, the famous New York baseball player, whose large girth never impeded his speed, grace or power in batting, running or fielding.

THERE WAS NO CONTENTLESS conviviality or small talk in Harry Johnson's conversation. He never spoke for the pleasure of speaking or to fill in the empty moments of a conversation. It is not that he was given to silences; on the contrary, he could talk for hours. All that he said, however, had a point and it was not an isolated point; it was also part of an elaborate analysis resounding with overtones of new perspectives. He was not a Benthamite calculator of a felicific optimum, but when he considered something—and he never spoke about any subject without considering it—he had a way of tracing out ramifications of costs and benefits which no one else I have ever met possessed to such a degree.

It is not that he spent all his extraordinary energy and intelligence in discussing economics and university affairs. He would sometimes talk or write about some of the things which make up the substance of the gossip of others; but when he spoke about such things, often very vividly, they were discussed entirely without malice or *Schadenfreude* or predictions of disaster but always in a way which traced out causes and consequences and which saw implications. When, in a series of articles in ENCOUNTER (and particularly in a paper entitled "The Shadow of Keynes: Cambridge in the 1950s"),[1] he wrote about the teaching and study of economics at Cambridge, or when he touched in passing on the same activities at Yale and Chicago, he was not gossiping. He was trying to understand and explain why distinguished talents went astray in pursuit of economic truths. As he wrote me in his last note in February: "I am really after something complex—what causes the decay of academic excellence. . . ." When he discussed the "Keynesian revolution" and the "Monetarist counter-

HARRY JOHNSON, *well known to* ENCOUNTER *readers for his regular contributions to the magazine, died in Geneva on 10 May 1977, at the age of 53. He had been for many years Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago and was also (1966–74) at the London School of Economics. His last article in* ENCOUNTER *was "How Good was Keynes' Cambridge?" (August 1976).*

[1] The following articles by Harry Johnson were published in ENCOUNTER: "A Catarrh of Economists?" (May 1968), "Keynes & the Keynesians" (January 1970), "The World Monetary Crisis" (August 1970), "Revolution & Counter-Revolution in Economics" (April 1971), "A Word to the Third World" (October 1971), "The Achievements of P. T. Bauer" (November 1972), "Cambridge in the 1950s" (January 1974), "Negro Slavery" (January 1975), and "How Good was Keynes' Cambridge?" (August 1976).

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revolution", his aim was to understand and explain the zigzagging course of the growth of economic knowledge, and the significance of external social conditions and internal professional relationships in the improvement and retardation of economic analysis.

Matter-of-factness and evenness was in his voice and tone of discourse, but it was a matter-of-factness which exhibited the simultaneity and interconnectedness of events which only a person with a subtle and sympathetic intelligence could discern.

HARRY JOHNSON seemed to work under the principle which his much older fellow-Kingsman had put into the maxim: "Only connect." But in Harry Johnson's application of the rule, the connections he saw were those which linked scattered events together, in all sorts of remote, roundabout, self-annulling and self-accentuating ways. He brought together these intricate connections with speed and rigour; he articulated evidence and assertion at a speedy and even pace. The consecutiveness of his thoughts was as marked in his spoken discourse as it was in his writings. He did it all unceasingly.

He worked unceasingly. He did not confine himself to working out his own ideas; he read the literature of economics omnivorously, and knew its history as well as its current state. In everything he wrote as an economist, he regarded himself as a continuator and improver. He did not only read extraordinarily widely, attentively and retentively in economic theory: he also covered the statistical literature. He was as empirical as he was theoretical. He was sensitive to minute analytical differences but saw them in the perspective of the larger field of economics. That is why he was ideally fitted to write a history of economic thought. As far as I know he did not intend to do so; instead many of his writings, by their meticulous appreciation of the steps by which analysis has progressed, are fragments of such a history.

Harry Johnson was not an antiquarian. He was not like Piero Sraffa, a person to whom the history of economic thought was a subject to be savoured for its own capacity to give intellectual pleasure. Nor was he at least externally inclined towards piety towards the past because of its pastness. He wanted economics to be a science; and in order for it to become such, it was necessary to appreciate what had already been accomplished.

He accepted that economics had to progress by improving on what had been done previously. That required unremitting study of the entire literature of economics but it was not enough; it also required the study of the new evidence, and fortunately the strength, speed and capaciousness of his mind allowed him to do this. This was not enough for him either. He wanted those around him to write and publish and to discuss what they were doing straightforwardly but without acrimony. His colleagues and pupils at Chicago were prolific in their production of papers and books and intense and forthcoming in discussion; this was one of the grounds of his satisfaction in his last decade there.

AS ONE OF THE Chicago economists in what he called the "theoretical missionary movement", which extended economic analysis to race relations, family life, and education, Harry Johnson reached into the consideration of universities and the organisation of learning. He did not study the literature of these subjects as he studied the literature of economics where he seemed to have read everything, old and new, and to remember the details of the most intricate arguments and of out-of-the-way statistics. But without reading so much of the disordered literature on the history of universities, and the history and administration of scientific research, he went to the heart of the matter, tracing preconditions and ramifications at many removes from the topic first considered and then bringing them back again to that topic.

The result of his belief in the rightness of the task which he had accepted—to improve economics and to spread its light—was a list of writings unequalled by his contemporaries and by few economists of the past. He wrote nearly five hundred articles and about twenty books, and every one of them was as tough and solid as he himself was.

Harry Johnson was a "missionary" in another, somewhat more traditional sense. The goal of the progress of economics in academic study and in suppression of pride and prejudice in economic policy laid upon him the obligation to travel to innumerable conferences and to teach in many universities. He did not go to conferences in Pakistan or Japan, or wherever, in order to have his fare paid so that he could go sight-seeing. He went there to learn from the best and the youngest of his colleagues, to question them about what they had written, to correct their errors and to bring them into the procession of economists who were contributing to the progress of their subject. After he was well settled in Chicago, he accepted a professorship at the London School of Economics to give his mission transatlantic scope. After he left the School (and after his first stroke) he became a professor at the *Institut des hautes études internationales* at the University of Geneva. He accepted visiting professorships at various universities, and conducted summer

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schools so that he could shepherd the flock of economists on to the right—but not at all strait—path.

MY OWN RELATIONS WITH Harry Johnson were at the margin of his unceasing labours in economics. I first met him not long after he came to the University of Chicago towards the end of the 1950s. He had come from Manchester where, although we had not overlapped in time, we had many common acquaintances. We also had a shared attraction to England. He was at first not entirely at home at the University of Chicago, where the rough and tumble of discussion in the economics department—inherited from the time of Frank Knight and Jacob Viner, and carried on more courteously and relentlessly by Milton Friedman and with jocularity by George Stigler—was not quite what he liked. He was thinking of throwing up his post at the University of Chicago and accepting a very attractive invitation to Johns Hopkins University. He wanted my advice; I tried to persuade him to stand his ground and to give as good as he got. He soon demonstrated his mastery of that kind of intense give-and-take, and enjoyed it. So much so that he came to regard it as one of the merits of the department where "economics is really taken seriously."

At the University of Chicago, my dealings with him were mainly contained in his participation in the Committee for the Comparative Study of New States, his advice and written contributions to *Minerva*, and his activity as a member of the Committee on the Criteria of Academic Appointment. These showed him in some of his various roles as a member of the "theoretical missionary movement" of economic analysis and in his concern for the quality of universities. In the first, he extended his ideas about tariffs and economic nationalism to the study of the historical origins of nationalistic and collectivistic economic policies in the poor—mainly recently colonial—countries. The economic nationalism which he censured in his native Canada—he never ceased on his frequent returns to lecture the Canadians on their self-defeating illusions—he censured no less stringently when it was practised in poorer countries. He was no less severe in his criticism of "economic planning" in these countries. As he wrote in his appreciation of Professor Peter Bauer and as he said in his lecture at the University of Ghana, the price of these policies was paid by the poor, *i.e.* the peasantry, and the beneficiaries of these policies were university graduates in the civil service and the universities. This point was made repeatedly in his visits to poor countries

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and in his discourse to academic social scientists in Great Britain and the United States.

His own activities on behalf of *Minerva* were part of his wider missionary interest to apply economic analysis in fields generally untouched by it. He had already been a consultant to the House of Representatives Committee on Science and Astronautics, and he was also a member of the British Council on Science Policy; and *Minerva* and I, as its editor, benefited from the continuation of his interests in this field and their expansion into universities and institutions involved in the acquisition of knowledge. His papers on the "brain drain", and on the economics of scientific research, transformed the discussion of those subjects. They were instances of how a great logical power and a dispassionate and ample knowledge of facts can reconstruct topics befogged by idealism and distorted by self-serving propaganda.

MY MEETINGS WITH Harry Johnson were almost always on occasions provided by our common academic concerns. Sometimes we met for dinner at his home or mine. In the course of them I was able to see those things which were constant and those which were growing in him.

What was constant was the flawless lucidity of his mind, his extraordinary rapidity of thought, and the justice of his comprehension, the austere and elevated conception which he had of the university teacher's obligations and the economist's calling, his capacity to pursue complex chains of reasoning, his incomparable industry, assiduity and efficiency. He disliked pomposity and pretence; he disliked the claims of educated civil servants and academic social scientists that a society which they dominated would be made better by the very fact of their determination of its policies.

He took the responsibility of a teacher of economics as unqualified. One never put a question or a task to him to which one did not receive a written reply in a very short time, very cogent and succinct and as brief as the problem permitted and as long as it required.

What grew in him was the indomitability of his will. When he had been in good health, there was no journey which he would not undertake to deliver a paper or to participate in a seminar and to leave behind a few home-truths about economic theory and economic policy.

As he acquired more students he became even more devoted to them than he had been before. Increasing fame and widely dispersed obligations did not divert his attention from his students. He spent more time with them when he had less of it to spend. He required from his students that they be as serious about economics as he was and as willing to work as hard at it. In terms when he was away from the University of Chicago he might sometimes pass through Chicago for a day on a flight from London to Pakistan with a stop in Singapore; he would gather his students around him for most of that day to review and criticise their work and give them new directions and stimulus. When Harry Johnson and his pupils went to the faculty club for a drink before dinner, there still was no aimless camaraderie. It was all about some fine points of international economics or monetary policy. Then he would be off.

AFTER HIS STROKE it was hardly any different, except that he could not drink alcohol. He had in the past been capable of imbibing large quantities of wine and whisky and practically never showed any ill-effects in his thought or speech. When not so long before his first stroke he was ordered to stop drinking, he stopped at once and totally, just as he had stopped smoking cigarettes and had taken to wood carving after an earlier warning.

Whatever he did, he did unremittingly and thoroughly. It must have been more difficult for him after the first stroke since he had to walk with a stick, and he never fully recovered the use of his left hand. But the stroke could not stop him. Even his carving did not stop; one of his hands being too weak to hold the wood while he carved with the other, he had a small vise attached to his desk so he could get on with his carving while speaking with students and colleagues.

Within a week of the stroke which befell him in Venice in October 1973, when he lay in bed in the Ospedále civile on the Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo, with his left side paralysed, scarcely able to speak but still able to smile, he was already back at economics. There was a pile of new books on economics by his bedside, and a writing pad and a pencil at his right hand. Speaking with difficulty, he said, with a diffident smile, as if craving my understanding, "I still have to work. . . ." Within a few weeks, although still very handicapped in his movements, he was again writing articles and reviews. In a fairly short time, the flow of papers and books took up where it left off. Not much later, his travels began again. When he resigned from the London School of Economics, although I regretted the atmosphere in which it occurred, I thought to myself: "Now Harry will take life a little more easily and he won't dash about quite so much." That was a wrong prediction. He was soon off to Japan, the Fiji Islands, Pakistan, *etc., etc.* He seemed to be

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travelling as much as ever, and he smiled wanly but proudly when I chided him for it.

Why did he do it? Of course he was proud of his reputation as an economist of great intellectual powers and voluminous bibliography. He was delighted when his accomplishments were recognised; he took pleasure in the honours which he had received and he liked the attention given to him in all those places of the world which he visited. He was especially pleased by the reverent (and uncomfortable) attention which he was accorded in his native Canada.

It was certainly not vanity which caused him to put in so many hours, days, weeks and years in teaching so many students so thoroughly and patiently, in working so painstakingly over such masses of economic literature, reports and documents, to write those numerous papers and books. Harry Johnson believed that some men might be persuaded to behave more reasonably in the conduct of their economic affairs. That is why he believed in economic analysis. He did not, however, think that economic improvement should be the be-all and end-all of human existence. In so far, however, as it is sought, serious economic analysis was an indispensable condition of effective action; and he thought that intellectual integrity in the discussion of public policy would be impossible without the mastery and advancement of economic analysis. He thought of economics as a science with exigent claims of its own as an intellectual discipline, and with no less strong claims on the conduct of politicians, civil servants, businessmen, and journalists. He himself heeded those claims, and he gave his life to their service.

AUTHORS

Gillian Tindall's latest book, *The Fields Beneath: The History of One London Village* (Temple Smith), is a study of the urban history of Kentish Town.

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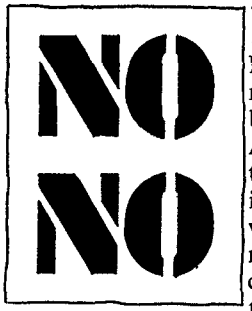
DISCUSSION

The Arts Council & Poetic Injustice

By Roy Shaw



ROY FULLER'S ARTICLE in the October ENCOUNTER made sad reading for me. Sad not because it criticises the Arts Council; for, after the BBC, the Arts Council is everybody's favourite whipping boy. Moreover many of the public criticisms are so ill-founded that they irritate rather than sadden. For example, we are constantly having the Tate's bricks thrown at us, and I grow weary of explaining that they are nothing to do with the Arts Council. Some criticisms cancel each other out, like the occasional right-wing claims that we unduly favour left-wing arts (Roy Fuller comes nearly to this himself) balanced by the left-wing claims that we are an establishment body out to stifle left-wing arts activities.

No, the sadness springs from the fact that Roy Fuller is a poet whose work I have admired for many years and is a person whom I liked on first meeting and for whom I still feel an affectionate regard. Nevertheless, I think he has got most things wrong in his indictment of the Arts Council, and displays in his article the intemperance and extreme prejudice which made it difficult for colleagues on the Arts Council to go along with him, even when they had some sympathy with his views. For example, I am told that several of his colleagues on the Literature Panel were distressed by his frequent references to applicants for grants as "layabouts."

For my part, I am particularly sad that in his article he chooses to name Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams and suggest that in having both as members, the Council had "rather more than bad luck." I suspect most ENCOUNTER readers would think the Council was fortunate to have as members two of the leading English writers on cultural policy. Perhaps Roy Fuller cannot forgive Richard Hoggart for having jestingly called him a "blimp" in a discussion on literature policy. Yet the very same word sprang to many people's lips at the Arts Council in considering Roy Fuller's attitudes He was, of course, far more intelligent and sensitive than Low's celebrated Colonel Blimp, yet his attitudes were decidedly blimpish. To associate Jeremy Hutchinson QC with Hoggart and Williams (by saying that Hutchinson had "been Hoggart's feed at the *Lady Chatterley* trial") is both unfair and absurd. Unfair because it suggests close partnership between two people who met in a court of law, but who on the Arts Council are very much their own men and pursue quite independent roles; absurd because it suggests some kind of conspiracy, one which certainly does not exist.

Running through Roy Fuller's article is concern about aesthetic standards, and he gives a number of instances where he thinks these have been shamefully neglected. As he acknowledges, I share his general concern; but unfortunately I think he is wrong on almost all the examples he gives of the Arts Council's failure to safeguard standards.

What he thought to be "hideous contemporary paintings" bought by the Arts Council made him think that it would be right to abolish public subsidy entirely. Roy Fuller is an excellent poet, but he is not an authority on contemporary painting and neither am I; the paintings are bought on the advice of people who are. He invokes Philip Larkin's view that it is wrong to subsidise poets, but most poets do not have well-paid professional posts as Philip Larkin and Roy Fuller himself have. He criticises the Arts Council for subsidising the training of arts administrators, ignoring the fact that the arts need to be administered just as much as building societies or university libraries. Far from there being too many administrators around (and it of course muddies the argument to call them "bureaucrats"), there are in fact too few. It so happens that the day before writing this article I was approached by the Artistic Director of a theatre about the concern which she and others felt about the dearth of good administrators for senior posts.

Referring to the case of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, where a questionable exhibition caused a rumpus a year ago, Roy Fuller strangely forgets that he was party to an Arts Council clear and firm statement that the responsibility for the exhibition was that of the staff and controlling body of the ICA, and that the Arts Council could not subsidise bodies which failed to exercise judgment and discrimination. (The then Director of the ICA claimed that his job was merely to

ROY SHAW *has been Secretary-General of the Arts Council of Great Britain since July 1975; he was previously Professor and Director of Adult Education at the University of Keele. A reply by* ROY FULLER *will appear in the next* ENCOUNTER.

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reflect what was going on in contemporary art.) He also overlooks the significant fact that the ICA now has a new chairman of its governing body and a new director.

Referring to the Literature Panel itself, Roy Fuller speaks of the "Byzantine way the Council works." I find nothing Byzantine in the Council appointing a panel of experts in particular art forms to advise it on particular cases, since the Council itself could scarcely consider the details of hundreds of applications a year in every possible art form. If it were true (and I do not believe it is) that Arts Council patronage goes to "dotty" writers and so-called "Arts Council pensioners", then as Chairman of the Literature Panel, Roy Fuller was in a uniquely strong position to change this. Referring to the Poetry Society as though the troubles in it were the responsibility of the Council, he strangely fails to mention that the Society was the subject of a special assessment by the Arts Council and was given a warning that unless it put its affairs in order, the grant would be withdrawn. I share Professor Fuller's satisfaction that in the battle between what he calls "moderates and maniacs" the moderates are now in control. This is in itself a consequence of the Arts Council's firm line.

However, Roy Fuller's main misgivings centre on the Arts Council's policy towards performance art, regional arts associations and community arts. I do not think that in his two years as a member of the Council Roy Fuller ever saw any of these activities at first hand, so he is rather in the position of the character in, I think, a J. M. Barrie play who said: "The poetry of Robert Burns is indecent and immoral—I have not read it but that is my opinion."

Performance art grants are made on the recommendation of knowledgeable people who have seen the work of the performance artists, and their judgments are not invalidated by pointing out that some of the groups have bizarre names. Roy Fuller mentions that grants to regional arts associations total over £2,000,000 as though this were itself evidence of bad judgment. But again, the grants are made on the advice of members of the sizeable Regional Committee who see a good deal of the work of the regions, as do the officers of the Arts Council. The majority of taxpayers, for the use of whose money Roy Fuller is concerned, live in the regions and I think the Arts Council could be more plausibly criticised for not giving *more* to Regional Arts Associations. As it is, their work is carefully assessed and their financial needs thoroughly studied at lengthy meetings of the Regional Committee. I hope Roy Fuller is not succumbing to the metropolitan prejudice that anything in the regions must be second rate.

AND SO TO COMMUNITY ARTS. The Council's acceptance of a Committee on community arts was the last straw for Roy Fuller. He quotes a passage from the Report which he thinks is enough to show why he could not support the Committee's recommendations. Readers must surely share my inability to see why the passage he quotes is so damning, or why his judgment, based on mere prejudice without acquaintance with community arts, should be preferred to that of people like Professor Lawrence Gowing, Jeremy Hutchinson, and Laurence Harbottle (patronisingly described by Roy Fuller as a "successful and intelligent London solicitor"), who all had seen a good deal of community arts work. On quality he comments:

> "I daresay it would be fairly generally held in the community arts world that in such activities there were no standards of excellence, no good or bad. . . ."

I am surprised that he dare say such a thing when the Report explicitly said that it found that all the community artists to whom the members spoke accepted the need for judgments of quality, in this area of the Council's work as in all others. As it is our hard-worked Community Arts Committee constantly assesses quality and turns down a great many applications.

Roy Fuller is concerned about the "blurring"

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of arts education and social work in the community arts area, but a good deal of responsible contemporary opinion is in favour of more closely integrating arts support with educational activity, and where arts activity has a demonstrable therapeutic effect on, for example, otherwise anti-social young people then the social impact of art is not something to apologise for. Roy Fuller mentions the Report's recommendation of an extra officer as "increasing bureaucracy", but (and it is strange that he fails to mention this) the Council rejected the proposal for an additional officer.

Finally, in a second attack on Harry's Big Balloonz, when his personal acquaintance with their work is about as intimate as the character quoted above in relation to Burns, he goes on to express the view that support for such activities ought not to come from central funds for the arts. He appears to have forgotten that the main recommendation of the community arts report which he so much disliked was that support for these activities should be devolved as far as possible to the Regional Arts Associations and local authorities.

ROY FULLER ACKNOWLEDGES that the then Chairman and myself were alive to the need to maintain standards in the arts. I would add that so are the new Chairman and the other members of the Council, who he criticises, not least the maligned Dr Hoggart. So is Lord Redcliffe-Maud, who is castigated for referring to the undoubted fact that there are serious disagreements even among "serious critics" in music and art about what is good and what is phoney. Roy Fuller is kicking the barometer because it points to foul weather. I have myself referred in the Arts Council's Annual Report for 1976/77 to the difficulty of the Arts Council's job of assessing the value of works of art in a society which is riven by doubt about both moral and aesthetic standards.

The Arts Council is committed to evaluation and the application of standards and spends a good deal of time in assessing the quality of the work of new and existing clients. Roy Fuller and I would agree that if we abandon this notion of standards, chaos is come again. And we are threatened by chaos. Last year at an international commission of "experts" at the meeting of European Ministers of Arts, I found myself moving what I thought was a platitudinous phrase in a long resolution, a statement that we should be concerned to ensure the quality of the arts we subsidise. I was surprised when experts from several European countries rebuked me for proposing something so meaningless. "Quality", I was told, was far too subjective a notion to be used in cultural policy-making. They were equally surprised when I suggested that if they were right we could all pack up and go home. (I might have added that when we got home we should all resign.)

I briefly alluded to this, for me, memorable experience in last year's Arts Council Report. I was duly surprised when I found that some readers at least took objection to this revelation of what they regarded as an "élitist" attitude. For example, a group of out-of-work actors angrily told me that when theatres were in danger of closing, it was no time to talk of quality. Others employed as arts administrators, who should know better than unemployed actors, questioned the emphasis on quality and suggested that I seemed to think there were arts standards which could be kept in my office like the "standard yards" which used to be fixed to the wall in commercial areas to ensure accurate measurement.

The irony is that everyone talks about a good play or symphony and would resent the suggestion that they are making purely subjective statements like "I feel well." The rejection of standards is usually invoked not when some art activity or product is found good, but when it is found less than satisfactory. No one, it seems, objects to favourable qualitative judgments, but

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the response to unfavourable ones is often to call into question the whole process of evaluation. Recently a left-wing theatre group, whose work was deemed by our Drama Panel to be unsatisfactory, were convinced that they must be the victims of political persecution rather than an aesthetic judgment.

So I am happy to say (at last) that I agree with Roy Fuller that the prevailing (and growing?) scepticism about aesthetic and moral judgments is a threat to what politicians like to call (in an ironic phrase) "The Quality of Life." But it is unfair to make the Arts Council the scapegoat for trends in contemporary society which we both dislike. (Shades of Mrs Whitehouse's attacks on the BBC.) Members of the Arts Council and its paid staff must continue to make value judgments, otherwise we might as well replace the Director of Art (for example) by a bus driver. Perhaps eventually we shall; but not, I trust, in my time. Meanwhile we must all have the courage of our convictions, and failing that the courage of our confusions.

Which brings me to the one point where Roy Fuller criticises me personally. He refers to the apology given in the Annual Report to the artists Richard Hamilton and Dieter Roth, because a large catalogue containing a couple of paragraphs composed largely of four-letter words was not distributed. The decision to withhold was made by officers and one or two Council members who could be consulted in a hurry, but when the full Council met, it decided *on balance* that the catalogue could have been distributed. So it was my duty to make an apology—qualified by the remark that neither the officers nor the Council is infallible, and that despite this handicap we will continue to do our best.

ROY FULLER'S ARTICLE was headed "Taxpayers and the Arts." I suspect that taxpayers as a whole would sympathise far less with his "reactionary" attitude to standards than I do. They would certainly vote for community arts and Regional Arts Associations, and many of them would know more about the work of these than Roy Fuller does.

I was sad that he resigned and had sensed the feeling of isolation that he felt at Council meetings. This isolation was, however, largely the result of his tendency to make sweeping judgments in intemperate language, which even those with some sympathy with the underlying concern felt they could not go along with. It has been a labour of sorrow to attempt to demonstrate that the sweeping judgments in his article are likewise founded on his passionate beliefs rather than close attention to the facts.

LETTERS

Hayek's Wittgenstein & Popper

READING Friedrich A. Hayek's "Remembering My Cousin, Ludwig Wittgenstein" (ENCOUNTER, August 1977, pp. 20-22) the following part gave me a feeling of "*déjà vu*":

> "When I went to Cambridge in 1939 with the London School of Economics I soon learned that [Wittgenstein] was away working at some war hospital. But a year or two later I encountered him most unexpectedly. John Maynard Keynes had arranged for me to have rooms in the Gibbs building of King's College, and after a while I was asked by Richard Braithwaite to take part in the meetings of the Moral Sciences Club (I think that was the name) which took place in his rooms just below those I occupied.
>
> "It was at the end of one of these meetings that Wittgenstein quite suddenly and rather dramatically emerged. It concerned a paper which had not particularly interested me and the subject of which I have no recollection. Suddenly Wittgenstein leapt to his feet, poker in hand, indignant in the highest degree, and he proceeded to demonstrate with the implement how simple and obvious *Matter* really was. Seeing this rampant man in the middle of the room swinging a poker was certainly rather alarming, and one felt inclined to escape into a safe corner. Frankly, my impression at that time was that he had gone mad!"

The description of Wittgenstein, swinging with a poker, sounded familiar to me; I thought I had read about him behaving in this way sometime before. And indeed, I have found another recollection which looks much like the one given by Hayek.

Now, unless we suppose that Wittgenstein was swinging with a poker at several meetings of the Moral Sciences Club, the following quotation establishes, I think, for those interested in the biography of Hayek and Wittgenstein, the exact date of the meeting Hayek was attending and the title of the paper "which had not particularly interested" Hayek.

But, most of all, it gives the clue about whom was delivering the paper that had the described result on Wittgenstein.

> "Early in the academic year 1946–47 I received an invitation from the Secretary of the Moral Sciences Club at Cambridge to read a paper about some 'philosophical puzzle.' It was of course clear that this was Wittgenstein's formulation, and that behind it was Wittgenstein's philosophical thesis that there are no genuine problems in philosophy, only linguistic puzzles. Since this thesis was among my pet aversions, I decided to speak on 'Are there Philosophical Problems?' I began my paper (read on October 26, 1946, in R. B. Braithwaite's room in King's College). . . ."

Then follows a description of a discussion between the reader of the paper and Wittgenstein about being invited to deliver a paper on "some philosophical puzzle."

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". . . I went on to say that if I thought that there were no genuine philosophical problems, I would certainly not be a philosopher; and that the fact that many people, or perhaps all people, thoughtlessly adopt untenable solutions to many, or perhaps all, philosophical problems provided the only justification for being a philosopher. Wittgenstein jumped up again, interrupting me, and spoke at length about puzzles and the non-existence of philosophical problems. At a moment which appeared to me appropriate, I interrupted him, giving a list I had prepared of philosophical problems, such as: Do we know things through our senses? Do we obtain our knowledge by induction? These Wittgenstein dismissed as being logical rather than philosophical. . . . I then mentioned moral problems and the problem of the validity of moral rules. At that point, Wittgenstein, who was sitting near the fire and had been nervously playing with the poker, which he sometimes used like a conductor's baton to emphasize his assertions, challenged me: 'Give an example of a moral rule!' I replied: 'Not to threaten visiting lecturers with pokers.' Whereupon Wittgenstein, in a rage, threw the poker down and stormed out of the room, banging the door behind him."

The visiting lecturer Hayek presumably was listening to was Karl Popper. The above quoted description is from Popper's *Unended Quest; An Intellectual Autobiography* (Fontana/Collins, 1976, pp. 122–23). However, it may be suggested that I am running too fast to the conclusion that both recollections are concerned with the same meeting of the Moral Sciences Club. Especially since Hayek continues his note by remarking:

"After the end of the War, when I had already returned to London, a new kind of contact by letter began [with Wittgenstein] . . . ."

But in that case, in view of the exact date Popper refers to as when the meeting where the incident occurred took place and he himself being in New Zealand during the war, either Hayek must be erring in the chronology of events or, indeed, there are at least two incidents at the Moral Sciences Club in which Wittgenstein handled a poker in an aggressive way!

PERCY B. LEHNING

Amsterdam

I CAN ONLY conclude that it was a habit of Wittgenstein to drive his point home with a poker. I have, on one occasion, heard a similar story told which however, must have referred to another occasion, since it did not suggest the violence I recollect from some date certainly before 1946. I am sure I never heard Karl Popper lecture at Cambridge, and I have read his Autobiography only some time after I wrote the note you published.

F. A. HAYEK

University of Freiburg

Not "Spy Story", but Story of Courage

Nadya's Redemption—By VITALY RUBIN

IN Professor Allen Weinstein's article ("Nadya: A Spy Story", ENCOUNTER, June) on Mrs Nadejda Ulanovskaya's background as a spy, he gives only one facet in the life of this remarkable woman of our modern Russia, now a citizen of Israel. As one who, as a Soviet dissident prior to my own immigration to Israel last year, knew first-hand the selflessness, courage, and constant readiness to help of Mrs Ulanovskaya, I feel it is important that your readers know something more about her than her long-ago activities upon which the article focuses.

Certainly she never tried to hide from her friends the fact that in the 1920s and '30s she and her husband worked abroad in the Soviet intelligence service. Her actions at that time—which she herself now regrets—are part of the history of a whole generation in Soviet Russia who were victims of the "Great Illusion" of building a better world through Communist Revolution. But these actions have been more than redeemed by her life since then, after the illusion crumbled. Mrs Ulanovskaya's story truly is a history both of the overcoming of a false ideology and of an ascent to the very heights of human dignity and courage. I only wish Professor Weinstein might have spent more time chronicling this most important part of her story.

While the author does mention Mrs Ulanovskaya's arrest in 1948 and the subsequent years she spent in the Gulag Archipelago, he fails to provide a picture of how she responded to these most trying of circumstances. Perhaps he does not know, as this modest woman undoubtedly would not talk about it herself. But I would like to recount what was told to me by several women I met in Moscow who had shared the horrors of the Stalinist prison camp with her. For all, it was the greatest trial of human worth and strength; in the words of Pushkin, it was "the hammer crushing the glass and forging the steel. . . ." Mrs Ulanovskaya, according to her former prison mates, acted as a source of humanity in that most inhuman world. By her example and by her friendship, she supported those around her and gave them the strength to resist while keeping their self-respect and spirit. It is difficult to imagine anyone so adored by friends.

LET ME CITE just one specific example which was reported to me. It was the custom in the camps that immediately after the arrival of the prisoner from interrogation in Moscow, each woman was summoned to the *KGB* representative who put considerable pressure on the new detainee to become a *KGB* informer. Women frantically tried to find a pretext for refusing this offer; and for many these encounters became a nightmare for months. The *KGB* tactics

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Peking

PEKING FOUR: *Works by Shakespeare are to be published in China for the first time since the start of the Cultural Revolution in the middle 1960s. Translations are being prepared of Cervantes, Heinrich Heine, and Mayakovsky (the Russian revolutionary poet who committed suicide in 1930).*

This ends a sterile decade in which ultra-Left radicals banned almost every kind of foreign art and literature. The ban on music by Beethoven and other Western masters was lifted two months ago.

The People's Daily *said the publication of Shakespeare and the German and Russian writers was to mark the thirty-fifth anniversary of a speech by Mao dictating that culture should serve workers and peasants.*

Shakespeare was not on sale in Peking shops yesterday, but in the capital's largest book-store an assistant said she expected delivery of the new edition soon.

DAILY TELEGRAPH/GUARDIAN

London

BIBLIOPHILIACS: In the last century there is supposed to have been a lady who arranged the books in her library on a systematic basis unknown to John Evelyn. Alphabetic principles were observed only so long as they did not require books by male and female authors to rub shoulders (not to mention spines) on her shelves. Exceptions were made for Mr and Mrs Browning and other authors who had been married to one another.

The motive was propriety: there is no reason to think that she supposed the usual tendency of books to multiply beyond the capacity of the shelving provided for them was due to interbreeding. The idea of inconceivable quartos combining the qualities of Eliot (G) and Eliot (T. S.), Sterne and Stowe (Harriet Beecher), or Keats and Krupskaya did not dismay her. Even individuals as dotty as she usually retain a bottom of good sense.

THE TIMES

Washington D.C.

DEFINITIONS: *What is a "cruise missile" (which is so disrupting US-USSR disarmament talks?)*

A cruise missile is a weapon which travels on wings and is propelled by an air-breathing engine. The idea is not new. The German V-1 which was used against London during the closing phase of World War II was a cruise missile. The English called it a "buzz bomb."

The US is not at present building any cruise missile of strategic range or weight. But the US is well advanced in the kinds of technology which could in theory make a big difference in the balance of power. A self-correcting guidance system could at least in theory take a cruise missile straight to its target with "Zero CEP." CEP stands for "circular error probable." Zero CEP means what a layman would call a bull's-eye hit.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

London

HEAVEN'S MY DESTINATION: A Bill exempting turban-wearing Sikh motor cyclists from compulsory use of crash helmets was introduced and given a formal first reading in the Commons yesterday.

The Motor Cycle Crash Helmets (Religious Exemption) Bill was introduced by Mr Sydney Bidwell (Lab., Southall) who said it had all-party support and was based on "a great principle of religious freedom."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York

BETWEEN SWIFT & DICKENS: *Lawyers and judges seem to have a "peculiar cant and jargon of their own, that no other mortal can understand", Gulliver said of the people he met in his travels. Lawyers have ignored such Swiftian barbs for centuries, content to practice a mysterious science inaccessible to the uninitiated.*

But now, in law journals, lawyers and judges are beginning to worry about how often they have been misunderstood, and they are discovering that sometimes they cannot even understand each other.

A recent Law Review *article related the tale of the confused and frightened client who is greeted by his lawyer with "a flurry of references to such legal esoterica as the voir dire, res ipsa loquitur and rule in Shelley's case. The lawyer assumes comprehension (or is attempting to prevent it). The client shakes his head and prays."*

Or take these examples from opinions published last month in the New York Law Journal. *At the pens of judges, "all the more" is stretched to "here-inbefore" and a routine landlord-tenant dispute is elevated into a controversy between the "petitioner-landlord-appellant" and the "respondent-tenant-respondent."*

Last year, a group of citizens monitoring courts around New York State found they could not hear what was going on. This year, another group of monitors in family court had no trouble hearing, but what they heard was a modern version of Dickens's Chancery Court, where Mr. Tangle and his learned friends "tripped one another up on slippery precedents", groped "knee-deep in technicalities" and pondered "walls of words."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

JUST TOO-TOO: In the Memoirs of Diana Mosley—sister of Jessica, Nancy and Unity Mitford—the family is all, and the language is characteristic. "Farve" [father Lord Redesdale] is still "saintly", Greece "heavenly", sisters are "in deep despair" (i.e., temporarily upset) and brother Tom plays the piano "divinely." This is an ancient and formalised vocabulary which readers of Nancy's novels or Jessica's memoirs will understand and interpret with a discreet austerity.

THE TIMES

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consisted of an appeal to "the conscience of a Soviet patriot" while dangling the promise of better conditions as a reward for cooperation and the threat of a worsening of the camp régime as a punishment for refusal. Mrs Ulanovskaya resolved to state her position against the *KGB* firmly and irrevocably. When summoned for her interview, she stood her ground—denying that she now could ever be a "Soviet patriot", scorning any offers of favours from the camp administration and refusing to be intimidated by threats of reprisals. She was never summoned again.

After her release from camp the Ulanovski home became one of the meeting places in Moscow for free-thinking people, dissidents, and Jewish activists. It would be impossible to list all that Mrs Ulanovskaya did during those years to help those persecuted for their opinions. I personally know dozens of such cases. I myself was given refuge in her apartment when, in 1974, I was attacked by the Soviet authorities as a "parasite."

We were not attracted to Mrs Ulanovskaya because, as Mr Weinstein writes, of "her ability to translate from English into Russian for *samizdat* distribution and partly because her age and earlier services to the party . . . conveyed a somewhat greater degree of immunity from constant harrassment by the security organs." In fact, there was no immunity for Mrs Ulanovskaya. She never was a party member. (The Ulanovskis apparently were the only Soviet spies who were not members of the party. Professor Weinstein notes this when he speaks about Nadejda's husband; however, in discussing her, he incorrectly states that she became a Bolshevik at the age of fourteen. That was not the case then, or ever after.) By the same token, Mrs Ulanovskaya's services as a translator were not significant as a reason for her home becoming our meeting place. Nor did her apartment serve as a centre for "hiding forbidden literature." The vitality of *samizdat* is the very fact that it is hidden and distributed in *hundreds* of apartments.

The truth is that it was not any utilitarian considerations that attracted us to Nadejda Ulanovskaya. Those of us in the dissident movement who flocked to her home came because we knew our host to be a woman of highest honesty, kindness, and wisdom. We knew that we could find here the greatest sympathy and help, and we would also meet like-minded people. These human qualities of this much loved and respected woman are the primary reasons why her home became an important centre of Soviet dissident activity during the 1970s. Mrs Ulanovskaya understood quite well that her activities would be viewed with extreme disfavour by the *KGB*. I can recall many times when farewell parties for Jewish activists before their departure for Israel were held at her home, attracting hundreds of people. On each such occasion policemen and plain-clothes *KGB*-men stood outside the entrance to her house. But Mrs Ulanovskaya had made her choice. The words "You cannot hurt me any longer" (which Professor Weinstein quotes) expressed clearly her moral stand and fearlessness. In this context they were certainly much more than merely an objective statement of her situation, as Professor Weinstein seems to interpret it.

I can understand the author's special interest in Mrs Ulanovskaya's activity as a spy, and I have no real argument with his description of that period. But I do regret that in his account of her life since then, he failed to take into consideration the very special qualities that have endeared this most extraordinary woman to so many of us.

VITALY RUBIN

Jerusalem

I APPRECIATE Vitaly Rubin's letter. Nadya Ulanovskaya is everything he says she is—and still more. My admiration for her grows as I learn more about her extraordinary life, and I *began* as a devoted admirer.

ALLEN WEINSTEIN

New York

how to enjoy CHRISTMAS

see page 27

Sense & Silliness

I AM PUZZLED by the flat self-contradiction between the first paragraph of comment by "Column" (July, p.17) on Peter Jay's appointment as Ambassador in Washington, and those that follow on p.18. Were they written by two different commentators?

Page 18 spells out clearly why Jay's appointment was surprising: the great contrast and opposition between his views on our economy, its conduct and prospects, and those of the present government, which he is now to defend. This contrast, *R* says, "make[s] his mission a hazardous one, both for himself and the country he is to represent." It was this, clearly apprehended by those who know Mr Jay's views, which prompted the criticism, and inevitably led to suspicion of nepotism in the appointment. Further ground for criticism, strengthening the speculation, was the "nausea and contempt" (your own description) widely felt about the treatment of the Ambassador made to make way for Jay's appointment.

This was not at all an example of "the English" (surely an American writing?) "behaving at their silliest" but an example of instinctive good sense and good manners in the true British tradition.

I. A. SHAPIRO

University of Birmingham

I DO NOT really think there was any contradiction involved. The indignation aroused by Mr Jay's appointment seemed to have been provoked entirely by the fact that he was the Prime Minister's son-in-law, and not at all by his views on the British economy, which nobody seemed to think worth mentioning.

But I am sorry to have puzzled Mr Shapiro.

R

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